Dasa-Sudra Slavery

(Studies in the Origins of Indian Slavery and Feudalism and Their Philosophies)

Y. S. ALONE
DEC '1995

SHARAD PATIL

99374

DECCAN COLLEGE
LIBRARY
Pune 411 006
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

1982

ALLIED PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED
NEW DELHI BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS
BANGALORE HYDERABAD

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

An Acknowledgement

As a full-time Communist worker (since 1946) I was called upon to conduct study circles of peasant and, since 1956, of Adivasi cadres in Dhule district. Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and books by Dange, Sankrityayana, etc. failed to satisfy me. I started research on the present book in 1957.

I fought for the rural poor and the *Ati*-Śūdras during the day-time and struggled to know the history of their country during the night. I am not an academician. Hence, no academic amenities were available to me. A full-timer without any wages, I starved for the movement and begged and borrowed money for purchasing books. As a six-footer youth I was more hungry than a normal Indian and as a Śūdra I wanted to know more than the neo-Brahminical Communist leadership wanted me to. But, persons who sympathised with me or my cause – most of them non-Communists – came forward to help me, with books or money or food or lodging. They are too numerous to be listed here. Hence, my first acknowledgement is to all those unlisted friends.

It was Vidya-bhaskar (sun of knowledge) Manishankar Upadhyaya of Baroda who ushered me in Pāṇini in the year 1966-67. During two years (1966-68) of intensive research in Baroda, Mr. and Mrs. Magan Desai provided me with free lodging and T. Narayan fed me in his Shri Dining Hall at the rate of Rs.40 per month!

It was at Magan Desai's place that I first met J.K. Desai, whose fine scholarship has been my greatest succour and whose limited financial resources have never known their limitations for me. The famous Gujarati writer Dhanvant Oza opened my eyes to the real worth of the work I was doing.

The year 1970 was already on its way out. The end of research and the beginning of the book were still not in sight. At this juncture, Krishna Raj wrote to me that his *Economic and Political Weekly*

wanted a review of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's book *Who Were the Shudras* and that Dr. I.P. Desai, Director of the Centre for Social Studies, Surat, had recommended my name. The unfinished review burgeoned into the present book by the end of 1972.

Then started the quest for a publisher. Six years passed. Dr. Ghansham Shah, who succeeded Dr. I.P. Desai, entrusted the matter to Rajni Kothari and D.L. Sheth. These two approached the Allied Publishers to take up the book. It attracted adverse remarks by their then expert. I was furious. The book then was referred to Dr. Romila Thapar. Her fulsome praise ensured the publication of the book.

I read Dr. Dharmendra Nath Shastri's classic *Critique of Indian Realism* in Yeraoda Jail in 1965. He has been a constant source of inspiration and advice since then.

My acknowledgement to all these listed, and, last and not the least, to Allied.

The methodology is, of course, not traditional Marxist. Since 1978 I call it Marxist-Phule-Ambedkarist. It is not simply class, but varna-jati-class or caste-class.

21 June 1981
'Asantosh',
Vadi-Bhokar Road,
Dhule-424 002

SHARAD PATIL

Contents

An Acknowledgement vii

1. The Problem 3
2. Early Vedic Society 17
3. Clan-Mother to Tribal-Mother 33
4. Dice and Agriculture 52
5. Earth Mother 70
6. Matriarchy 95
7. Marriage 126
8. Brahman 142
9. Sacrifice 172
10. Indus Epoch of Asura Priest-kingship 211
11. Dāsa Slavery 238

Bibliography 329

Index 336

Transliteration

अ a, आ ā, इ i, ई ī, उ u, ऊ ū, ऋ r, ए e, ऐ ai, ओ o, औ au

क् k, ख् kh, ग् g, घ् gh, ङ् ṅ
च् c, छ् ch, ज् j, झ् jh, ञ् ñ
ट् ṭ, ठ् ṭh, ड् ḍ, ढ् ḍh ण् ṇ
त् t, थ् th, द् d, ध् dh, न् n
प् p, फ् ph, ब् b, भ् bh, म् m
य् y, र् r, ल् l, व् v
श् ś, ष् ṣ, स् s, ह् h
ं ṁ, ः ḥ

D. C. P. R. I.

"Mānuṣā mānuṣān eva dāsa-bhāvena bhuñjate;
Vadha-bandha-nirodhena kārayanti divā-niśam.
Ātmanaś'ca api jānāti yad duḥkham vadha-bandhane."

"Human beings, enslaved by human beings,
are exploited by them;
Tortured, shackled, and incarcerated,
are forced to work day and night.
(But) They (who do this) themselves know,
The agony evoked by torture and chains!"

– Mahābhārata, XII.262. 38-39.

1

The Problem

Dāsas and Śūdras were the first ever creators of wealth, in the sense of surplus product, in ancient India. The great Indian civilisation, which their ceaseless, back-breaking toil spread over nearly three millennia has raised and nourished, has, in return, fashioned and perpetuated the shackles of their slavery and servitude. State power has terrorised them into smouldering submission, religion has preached to them the preordained birthright of servitude, and philosophy has revealed to them the evanescence and unreality of 'this' world of travail and the eternality and reality of 'that' world of bliss.

Resurrected Brahminic Hinduism declared through the mouths of Purāṇas that Kṣatriyas had ceased to exist with the advent of the Śūdra Nandas, replacing thereby the four-caste system with the two-caste system.[1] Viṣṇu Dharma-sūtra, compiled between the third and the fourth centuries B.C., coined for the first time the term 'untouchable' (aspṛśya), thereby legalising the pariah status of a vast section of Śūdra toilers.[2] The mediaeval legal pandits, Raghunandana of Bengal (fifteenth century A.D.) and Nāgabhaṭṭa of Maharashtra (eighteenth century A.D.), laid down that only two castes exist in the Kali age, namely, Brahmins and Śūdras.[3]

The jagad-guru Sankaracharya of Puri defends the divine origin and the resulting eternality of the caste society and the justifiability of the degradation of the Hindu women. The Sankaracharya evidently re-echoes the following passage of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa: '. . .Woman, the Śūdra, the dog and the black bird (the crow) are untruth; he should not look at them.'[4] The Śūdra-hating Monistic Idealism of the first Sankaracharya[5] has virtually become the state philosophy of the Indian republic.

With the hour of the final liberation of the Śūdras of industrial society drawing near, the problem of the origin of the slavery of their Dāsa Śūdra progenitors presses for solution. Glorification of the good and slurring over or minimisation of the evil in the nation's past was

D. C. P. R. L. Purn-C.

the weapon with which our revivalist scholars countered the attempts of the British imperialists at national humiliation during the period of freedom struggle. Slavery in ancient India received the same treatment at the hands of these scholars. Being one of the foremost of our traditional scholars and also a follower of Tilak, P.V. Kane's view represents this trend the best:

> Slavery was probably not much in evidence in India in the 4th century B.C. or the treatment of slaves in India was so good that a foreign observer like Megasthenes accustomed to the treatment of slaves in Greece thought that there was no slavery. . . .[6]

Tilak was, as were the other leaders of the national movement, a political representative of the Indian industrial class. His biographer N.C. Kelkar records that Tilak started a ginning factory at Latur in Maharashtra in about 1889.[7] Tilak hailed from a Khot landlord family, by caste Citpāvana Brahmin, and he wrote a series of articles in defence of Khot landlordism in 1899.[8] These semi-feudal affiliations made him an ardent champion of Hindu orthodoxy and led him to offer stiff opposition to the Age of Consent Bill which intended to prohibit child marriage by raising the minimum marriageable age limit of girls.[9] Therefore, it is no wonder that the political philosophy of these national leaders and their scholarly followers attempted to present exploitation in ancient India as exceptionally humane with the avowed intention of endowing the industrialist class with the heritage of this unique national tradition of 'exploitation without tears'.

If the upper caste intelligentsia of the rising Indian industrialists unfurled the anti-imperialist banner of neo-Hinduistic revivalism for the right of national exploitation, it was but inevitable that the non-Brahmin intellectuals of the regional and rural bourgeois elements raise the banner of anti-Brahminic social reform for the right of exploiting their own nationalities and castes. The non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra took shape in the last half of the nineteenth century primarily under the impact of the violent outbreaks of the Śūdra peasantry against the religious oppression of the Brahmins and against their pauperisation by usurer landlords mainly drawn from the Brahmin, Marwari, and Gujarati non-agricultural castes and nationalities.[10]

That is why these two movements, though uterine in their genesis, developed under their own inherent contradictions and hence clashed with each other. The former was anti-imperialist but pro-feudal and protagonist of caste society, while the latter was pro-British or pro-western but anti-feudal and against caste society; but both relied on the British rulers to gain their objectives. Nevertheless, both being primarily impelled by the germinating seeds of capitalist development sown unwillingly by the British themselves, the need of their mutual conflict passed into their urge for national unity in the third decade of this century. The most influential leaders of the non-Brahmin movement joined the Indian National Congress and led big masses of Maharashtrian peasantry into the great satyagraha of 1930.

After dealing with similar developments in Kerala[11] exemplifying the contradictory and complex manner in which the caste-divided people of India struggle to attain their objectives, E.M.S. Namboodiripad draws a bold and far-reaching conclusion:

> . . .every progressive popular movement in this caste ridden part of the world could not but have its edge turned against caste Hindu domination. . . .[12]

The non-Brahmin movement was founded and initially led by a great Mali, Mahatma Jotiba Phule (1827-1890). Marathas, another and numerically the biggest peasant proprietor caste of Maharashtra, participated in developing the movement to the fullest extent possible. The leaders of this movement, in its final phase, proved themselves to be but the political representatives of the rising rural bourgeoisie of their own castes, and hence they failed to transform the anti-Brahmin and anti-usurer-landlord struggle into a thoroughgoing anti-feudal and anti-capitalist struggle of all castes. That is why when the anti-Brahmin movement by and large came to an end after becoming a part of the national movement, the movement of the untouchables burst forth and developed under the leadership of an illustrious untouchable, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Apart from the significant contribution he made to the cause of the uplift of the untouchables, he attempted to end the age-old religious and social oppression of the untouchables by their conversion to the Buddhist religion, and set before them the goal of political liberation by embracing bourgeois republicanism. Significantly, Ambedkar himself considered his movement as a continuation of the non-Brahmin movement.[13] The tribute he pays to Phule in the dedication of his book *Who Were the Shudras* sums up his own credo:

> The Greatest Shudra of Modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule.

It is for this reason that the movement of the ex-untouchable castes finds itself today brought to a standstill at the very place where the non-Brahmin and similar other movements were cremated by history.

Nonetheless, Ambedkar was the first Śūdra who raised on the eve of independence in 1946 the fundamental question of ancient Indian history – who were the Śūdras, and made a serious attempt to answer it. He summed up the result of his investigations as follows:

> Two questions are raised in this book: (1) Who were the *Shudras*? and (2) How they came to be the fourth *Varna* of the Indo-Aryan Society? My answers to them are summarised below:
>
> 1. The *Shudras* were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race.
> 2. There was a time when the Aryan Society recognised only three *Varnas*, namely, *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*.
> 3. The *Shudras* did not form a separate *Varna*. They ranked as part of the Kshatriya *Varna* in the Indo-Aryan Society.
> 4. There was a continuous feud between the *Shudra* kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.
> 5. As a result of the hatred towards the *Shudras* generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the *Brahmins* refused to perform the *Upanayana* of the *Shudras*.
> 6. Owing to the denial of *Upanayana*, the Shudras who were *Kshatriyas* became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the *Vaishyas* and thus came to form the fourth *Varna*.[14]

Thus, the Śūdras, originally a ruling and exploiting people, were tricked into slavery by the villainy of the Brahmins by withholding upanayana from them. It was upanayana that admitted one to Vedic study and membership of an Aryan tribe.

The Dāsas and the Śūdras were supposed to have been autochthonous people who were defeated and subjugated by the invading Aryans. But the pre-Aryan civilisation to which the Dāsas belonged was comparatively a far more advanced civilisation, and it had been flourishing at least for one thousand years before the hordes of the pastoral Aryans started entering India in the middle of the second millennium before Christ (B.C. 1750). Were the Dāsas the ruling or servile class of the pre-Aryan Indus State? Archaeology is yet to provide a conclusive answer.

The challenge posed by the contention of the revivalist scholars to Marxist methodology was a basic one. If class society in India did not commence with a social formation based on production carried on mainly by slaves, but relied since its inception on the free labour of Vaiśya and later Śūdra peasantry, then Marxist methodology becomes

inapplicable, by and large, to Indian conditions.

Dange's was the first attempt to interpret Indian history by Marxist methodology. He tried to prove that India passed from the tribal primitive communistic stage to the slave stage:

> A question is raised as to what were the specific features of slavery in India? What role did it play in production?
>
> There are few who would deny altogether the existence of slavery in India. In the face of explicit records stating the kinds of slaves that existed, the rules regarding their liberation and their place in property inheritance, it is difficult for anyone to say that slavery did not exist.
>
> ...It was not the labour slavery of the Roman or Greek type. It was 'domestic slavery'. It only means that agricultural production on large-scale farms owned by slave-owners and worked by gangs of slaves was not the dominant form of production. But, in contrast with this, domestic slavery does not mean that the slaves did only 'personal service' to the master in the household. There is enough evidence to show that the slaves were set to production of household manufactures, on farms and even large-scale estates, along with 'free' peasants and even hired labourers. Slave-owners also hired out their slaves for work to bring income for their owners.
>
> .....
>
> This intertwining of the household community with domestic slavery and its existence over a long period without slavery supplanting other forms is a *specific feature of Indian slavery*.[15]

He reiterated the definition of Indian slavery and feudalism which he first enunciated in 1949:

> We might say that whereas the four *Varna*-system (*Varnashrama Dharma*) is the juridical-ethical expression of the period of later stages of barbarism and also of slavery and civilisation, the caste-system (*Jati-dharma*) is the expression of the rise and growth of Indian feudalism....[16]

If a society in which the main producers are free peasants while production by slaves plays only a subsidiary role can be characterised a slave society, then Indian feudal society must receive the same appellation; for, the same classes, free peasantry, and domestic slaves, existed side by side in the whole of the feudal period, and it was quite widespread right up to A.D. 1843:

> ...this abolition of slavery in India (which was only realised in 1843) has given us some valuable information. The documents prove clearly that slavery was widespread in almost all regions of the country and everyone was of the opinion that it was in accordance with Hindu law and has been in existence since ancient times. The existence of this institution among the Brahmins of Mithila, well known in the middle ages for their knowledge of sacred texts, is confirmed by the documents registering sales and purchases of slaves.[17]

After making a valuable survey of slavery during the period ranging from the Delhi Sultanate to its abolition by the British in 1843, Kosambi points out that under the Sultanate the slaves were utilised by the Sultans in such a way that the latter became independent of their vassals. For this purpose they kept a large number of slaves – up to 80,000 – some of whom were taught mechanical arts for employing them for useful production, some for guarding palaces, etc., some for working on plantations. On the other hand, small landholders, and especially retired soldiers, employed slaves to look after them in their old age which means that they served domestic needs.[18]

Kosambi thinks that slavery increased in the Mughal period and the increase was due to the Mughal policy of breaking up the age-old village communes.[19]

The second reason he gives is the increase in commodity production.[20] But why was there increase in commodity production? Because there was increase in trade. And why was there increase in trade? Due to increase in commodity production! A fine example of cakraka (circular) way of arguing, referred to by Indian logic.

As for the first reason, the question naturally arises as to how the Turks, who followed a religion the organisation of which was formally tribal and who themselves had spilled out of tribal communities, could break up Indian village communities which also had retained tribal vestiges? That task was fated to be accomplished only by the imperial capital of Great Britain.

The real cause of increase in commodity production was the collection of land revenue in cash instead of in kind which, according to Irfan Habib, came into vogue in the thirteenth century.[21]

But, the Turks were not the innovators of this system, though their monopoly of foreign trade contributed to its rise. Internal trade was stimulated by the resurgence of foreign trade in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries as pointed out by R.S. Sharma.[22]

If trade by itself had been the sole cause of the commutation of land revenue in cash, then the system should have originated during the Gupta period itself. The spread and increase in the cultivation of cash crops and the spurt in the caste-based crafts,[23] entrance of Marwari and Gujarati mercantile and money capital in internal and foreign trade, brisk activity in Indian ship-building, all this taking place in the eleventh century, denotes a new and higher stage in feudal production in India.[24] These are the factors, taken in their totality, that

necessitated the commutation of land revenue from kind to cash. R.S. Sharma gives concrete instances of this important change in the Indian revenue system.[25]

Kosambi attributes the same causes to the heavy percentage of slaves in Canara and Kerala:

> About 1800, North Canara district had an estimated 16,201 slaves against 1,46,800 free persons (BJ.2.442). South Canara, 47,358 slaves in a total population of 3,96,672 (BJ.3.2-6); Malabar 16,574 slaves, 1,06,500 free (BJ.2.362). This included women and children, yet these proportions are unusually high. Slaves also had a wage scale but in Malabar were abominably treated (BJ.2.371). The reason for this brief period of slavery was in part historical and partly the high relative incidence of commodity production at the time and place. . . .[26]

In spite of his encyclopaedic erudition, Kosambi failed to study the social system of Kerala, which holds the key to the solution not only of the problem of the 'unusually high' proportion of slaves in Kerala, but also of the problem of slavery in ancient India. The problem has been fully dealt with in the body of the book. References to the social system of Kerala are made here only to clear up the point raised by the present discussion. Kerala has remained matrilineal until recent times. Its basic social unit is the matrilineal joint family called taṙavad. It is described by Irawati Karve as follows:

> . . .When a *thārwad* becomes too big and splits, it generally splits along *thavazhies*. If lands in a distant village need to be looked after by a household living near the lands, then a junior *thārwad* is set up in such a way that a sister or daughter of the old *thārwad*, together with her descendants, is given a new house near the lands. The property is held jointly by the mother *thārwad* and sister *thārwad* unless a definite partition with the consent of all has occurred.[27]

A taṙavad split up when its members numbered more than a hundred.[28] The land of a taṙavad began to be partitioned only with the enactment of tenancy laws.[29] Though all property is inherited in the female line, the taṙavad property, including its land, is managed by the eldest male member called Karanaver.[30] *The vast taṙavad and temple rice lands used to be tilled exclusively by agrestic slaves, domestic slavery being unknown in Kerala. The institution of slavery was not of recent advent and brief duration as Kosambi would like us to think; for it was brought into being by the matriarchal – or rather its child matrilineal – agricultural civilization of Kerala itself.*[31]

As for commodity production, Irfan Habib points out that Gujarat

was the most advanced province in trade and cultivation of cash crops throughout the Mughal period.[32] Though Gujarat was the greatest producer of cash crops and manufactured goods, as well as the greatest emporium of mediaeval India, the proportion of slaves in Gujarat was negligible, and whatever slaves there were, were of exclusively domestic category.

Dange's identification of Indian slavery with four-varna system, though ingenious, is not sustainable. Four varnas, according to him, was the basic characteristic of the varna system. But, only two varṇas – slaves and slaveowners – existed in the north-western frontier countries of Yona and Kamboja in the time of the Buddha.[33] The saṅgha-gaṇas of Buddha's and Pāṇini's times had only two varṇas, namely, Kṣatriyas and Slaves-and-labourers (dāsa-karmakaras). According to the grammarian Patañjali (on Pāṇini IV.I.168), only the Kṣatriya masters were entitled to bear the tribal designation, and not only the servile population, but even the stray Brahmins and traders were beyond the pale of the tribal privileges. Among the Licchavi oligarchs who went to see the Buddha, many were of dark colour.[34] Bhaddiya, king of the Śākya oligarchy, was called the son of the black Godhā. Thus, the two varṇas in these oligarchies were not differentiated by skin colour as the four-varṇa system was claimed to have been. No such differentiation existed even among the Vedic Aryans and in the Brahminic Cātur-varṇya system. A black (Kṛṣṇa) Āṅgirasa is the composer of the Rg-vedic hymns VIII.85-87, X.42-44 and a dark (Asita) Kāśyapa is the seer of Rg-vedic hymns IX.5-24. The heroes and the heroines of the two great epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, namely, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Draupadi, were dark. And, lastly, as the Indus State was exclusively peopled by pre-Aryans, no such distinguishing feature as colour (varṇa) can be attributed to its servile class. Hence, the varṇa system standing on the exclusive basis of number four and skin colour cannot be the distinguishing feature of Indian slavery at all.[35]

Finding that dogmatic methodology could not succeed in explaining Indian history, the pendulum swung to the other extreme. The foremost exponent of this other variant of Marxist methodology is the well-known scholar, Dr. Ram Bilas Sharma. He contends that there was no slave society even in Greece and Rome, and makes the sweeping formulation that mankind as a rule passes directly from the tribal to the feudal society:

> The feudal mode of production is generated and developed within the framework of the old tribal society. It is not generated and developed within the framework of an imaginary society divided between slaves and slave-owners. In the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* Engels shows how among different tribal communities the transition to feudalism takes place. True, there were many slaves in Athens and Rome. But that does not prove that Athenian and Roman societies were divided between slaves and slave-owners or that these were prefeudal societies. In fact, before men can be bought and sold like commodities, the means to buy and sell them – money – should be sufficiently developed, the mode of production should be developed in order to utilise their labour power, there must be a market in which to sell the fruits of their labour, etc. Engels described precisely this kind of economic activity at Athens in connection with the growth of slavery there.[36]

In order to buttress his theory that slave society is an illusion (māyā) and feudal society is the only reality, he puts in the mouth of Marx and Engels his own formulation that the main conflict in Greek and Roman societies was not between slaves and slave-owners, but between the poor and the rich of the free sections of these societies.[37] The methodology of Marxist scholars such as Ram Bilas Sharma is to try to prove exactly what the bourgeois revivalist scholars had directed all their efforts to accomplish. Was the proportion of slaves in the Greek and Roman societies so negligible as R.B. Sharma makes it out to be? Let us see what Engels himself has to say about it:

> ...When Athens was at the height of prosperity the total number of free Athenian citizens, women and children included, amounted to about 90,000; the slaves of both sexes numbered 3,65,000, and the dependents – immigrants and freed slaves – 45,000. Thus, for every adult male citizen there were at least eighteen slaves and more than two dependents. The large number of slaves is explained by the fact that many of them worked together in manufactories with large rooms under overseers....[38]

Even before the reforms of Solon (B.C. 594), slaves outnumbered free Athenians.[39] As for the Romans, their main industry – agriculture – was exclusively worked by slaves.[40] The main conflict in Athenian society in its final phase, according to Engels, was between slaves and freemen.[41]

One of the greatest modern authorities on ancient Greek history, George Thomson, goes into greater details on the problem of slavery in ancient Greece:

> ..Some historians, anxious to present 'the glory that was Greece' in the most favourable light, have discounted the part played by slave labour and even declared that 'Greek society was not a slave society'. In order to test

D. C. P. R. I. Pune-6.

such statements, it is enough to turn the pages of Herodotus and Thucydides.

Of the Greek word for 'slave' some were used loosely, but one had a very definite meaning. The word *andrápodon*, 'chattel slave', means literally a 'man-footed' creature, being formed on the analogy of *tetrapoda*, 'four-footed' cattle. Similarly, *andrapodistés* and *andrapodokápetos* meant 'slave-snatcher' and 'slave-dealer' respectively. . . .

The word occurs for the first time in the *Iliad*, where Eunoos of Lemnos offers wine in exchange for metals, oxen, hides, and slaves. . . . The slaves sold at Kyzikos were *ardrápoda*. . . . The first Greek city to employ chattel slaves was Chios, where there was a slave market throughout antiquity, and it is noteworthy that as early as 600 B.C. the constitution of this island was democratic. About the same time Periandros, tyrant of Corinth, sent 300 young men from Kerkyra, a Corinthian colony, to Sardeis, where they were to be castrated, and serve as eunuchs. A century later we hear, again from Chios, of one Panionios, who made a handsome fortune by procuring good-looking Greek boys, castrating them, and selling them at Ephesos and Sardeis. The people of Arisbe, one of the six original cities of Lesbos, were enslaved by their neighbours of Methymna. . . .[42]

This is the account of the Greeks enslaved by the Greeks. As for alien peoples enslaved by the Athenians, Thomson observes:

. . .We learn from Aristophanes and other Attic sources of his time that the slave population of Athens was drawn from countries as distant as Illyria, Thrace, Scythia, the Caucasus, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Lydia, Caria, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia. . . .[43]

The industries of Athens ran on slave labour and huge profits were made by slave-owners by hiring out their slaves.[44] To what extent agriculture of Athens was dependent on slave labour can be realised from the fact that even a poor peasant owned several slaves.[45]

Class struggles in ancient societies were not recorded as it is done in modern times – so many strikes, so many man-days lost, so many workers involved, etc. In the slave societies of both East and West, slaves were beyond the pale of ordinary law, and their masters held over them the power of life and death. Nevertheless, though the histories of these times were written by the scribes of these masters, they were compelled to record the most serious outbreaks of slaves:

. . .In Sicily the spark which kindled the devastating servile war was struck by a Syrian slave, who simulated the prophetic ecstasy in order to rouse his follow slaves to arms in the name of the Syrian goddess. . . .[46]

Ancient Egypt, one of the most ancient slave states of the world, saw a mighty uprising of its slaves and other toiling classes towards the end of the Middle Kingdom.[47] Another ancient slave state, China, followed suit:

There were slave uprisings during the course of many centuries in ancient China. A mighty uprising began in the 18th century B.C. Its participants dyed their eyebrows red as a means of identification, and thus the movement came to be known as the Red Eyebrow Rebellion. The rebels were slaves, freemen, craftsmen, fishermen and small traders. Having gained a victory over the regular troops, they moved on to the capital and occupied it. It was only through supreme effort that the ruling class was able to suppress the uprising, even though the participants were neither sufficiently well organised nor disciplined. . . .[48]

The leader of the rebellion of Roman slaves, Spartacus, has passed into legend:

Spartacus, a gladiator, organised a plot of gladiators in the city of Capua in 74 B.C. The plot was discovered and only several dozen slaves managed to escape from the city to Mt. Vesuvius. This handful of courageous men formed the core of the army of 60,000 men that fought under Spartacus in the south and north of Italy, defeating the armies of the slave owners. As a result of the joint efforts of all Roman forces, the slave-owners were finally able to defeat the rebels in 71 B.C. . . .[49]

What according to Dange is the characteristic feature of Indian slave society, is taken by R.B. Sharma to be the distinguishing feature of Indian feudalism:

. . .The feudal mode of production is small-scale production in town and countryside. Castes and varnas are the typical features of this society.[50]

He transforms his dogma into a universal truth:

. . .The feudal mode of production matures not within a society of slaves and slave-owners, but within the tribe. When the tribes split and reunite, new nationalities are formed, where a new division of labour prevails, and the people are not united by ties of blood kinship as in the tribe. The basic features of feudalism are the same in Europe and India.[51]

Thomson deals with this dogma of small-scale production as follows:

. . .What remains of Ehrenberg's argument? Simply this: The Athenian economy was based on small-scale production, and therefore slave labour cannot have played a large part in it. The fallacy is obvious.

The truth is that, just because they were based on small-scale production, the Greek city-states, having grown up in conformity with the new developments in the productive forces, especially iron-working and coinage, were able, under the democracy, to insinuate slave labour surreptitiously into all branches of production, and so to create the illusion that it was something ordained by nature. It was then that 'slavery seized on production in earnest'.

This was the culminating point in the evolution of ancient society. . . .[52]

The only scholar who has gone to the root of the problem of slavery in ancient India, pressing into his service his vast erudition, neglecting no source of information available on that subject, was the late Dr. Dev Raj Chanana. The most significant contribution he made to our understanding of ancient Indian society is as follows:

> We have. . .on the one hand regions (oligarchies) where an entire section of the population is considered as slaves, and, on the other hand, areas (monarchies) where this criterion does not hold.
>
> In the oligarchies, . . .slavery seems to have been, in spite of the insufficient data available, due to birth. The oligarchs possess slaves who must work for them. This fact is confirmed, above all, in agriculture, the principal industry (for commerce is not yet sufficiently developed) where the work is entirely carried out by slaves and servants. We are not contesting the existence of Brahmin villages (as for example among the Sakiyas) mentioned in the texts, nor suggesting that these Brahmin peasants were the slaves of the Sakiyas. We are simply observing that the supply of foodgrains (rice, barley, etc.) to the noble families depended on the slaves who had to cultivate the lands of their masters. . . .[53]

R.S. Sharma, basing himself exclusively on the smṛti writers who legislated for those regions of ancient India where the Brahminic four-caste system prevailed, considers the valuable findings of Chanana to be untenable:

> . . .Nevertheless the major conclusion of the writer that the practice of regarding a whole section of the population as slaves fits quite well into the oligarchic system is open to question. The brahminical lawgivers, who were staunch supporters of the monarchical form of government, laid down in very clear terms that Śūdra population was meant for the service of the three higher varṇas.[54]

The institutions of slavery in Kerala and in these ancient oligarchies have points of great similarities, excepting of course that Kerala is matrilineal while these ancient oligarchies were patriarchal. The other similarity between Kerala and these ancient oligarchies is that Brahminical smṛti laws were neither applicable to these oligarchies nor are they applicable to Kerala. Both social systems, in spite of some important differences, belonged to the non-Brahminical current of this country. Both these currents, the non-Brahminical and the Brahminical, have flown side by side throughout Indian history, clashing, interacting, and sublating each other.

This book attempts to trace the origin and development of Indian

slavery up to the period when it was finally displaced by feudalism, by making a comparative study of these two currents; for, as Sāṅkhya kārikā (52) says,

> . . .evolution is two-fold.

References

1. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. II, P. i, pp. 381-382.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 381-382; Chanana, D.R., *The Sanskritist and Indian Society, Enquiry*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1965.
4. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, p. 446.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 223-229.
6. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, p. 183.
7. Kelkar, N.C., *Lokamānya Tilak yāmce Caritra* (Marathi), pp. 237, 394-395.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 668.
9. Dutt, R.P., *India Today*, p. 269.
10. Kelkar, N.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78; Pavlov, V., *The Indian Capitalist Class*, pp. 273-275, 299, 304 ff. Classic work on the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra is Gail Omvedt's *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society, The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India: 1873 to 1930.*
11. Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 115-116.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
13. Ambedkar, B.R., *Who were the Shudras*, p. XXI.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. XIV-XV.
15. Dange, S.A., *India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*, pp. XI-XII.
16. *Ibid.*, p. XVI.
17. Chanana, D.R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, p. 3.
18. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 348-349.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Habib, Irfan, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, pp. 233-237.
22. Sharma, R.S., *Indian Feudalism: c. 300-1200*, pp. 248-249.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 251-253.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247, 249-250, 269.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.
26. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 350.
27. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 366.
28. Ehrenfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, p. 61.
29. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
31. Menon, Padmanabh, *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, pp. 272-273.
32. Habib, Irfan, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
33. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhimanikāya-pāli*, II.43.1.3.
34. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga-pali*, VI.18.30 : *The Sacred Books*

of the East, Vol. XVII, p. 106.
35. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Aṅguttara-nikāya-pāli*, I.14.6.
36. Sharma, R.B., *Feudalism, Varna, Caste and Nationality, Marxist Miscellany*, p. 118; also his Bhāṣā aura Samāja (Hindi), pp. 133, 211-212.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
38. Engels, F., *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, p. 117.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
42. Thomson G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. II, pp. 197-200.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.
46. Frazer, J.G., *Adonis Attis Osiris*, Vol. I, p. 74.
47. *An Outline of Social Development*, Part I, p. 62.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
50. Sharma, R.B., *Feudalism, Varna, Caste and Nationality, Marxist Miscellany*, p. 119.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Thomson, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.
53. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 43-44.
54. Sharma, R.S., *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, p. 35.

2

Early Vedic Society

Mankind everywhere started its career with the organisation called the horde. Excepting the upright gait of its members, the increasing use to which they put their hands for appropriating the readymade products of nature and their articulated sounds accompanied by profuse gesticulations, the horde differed little from animals.[1] They mated indiscriminately like animals. Mahābhārata has preserved the dim memory of that hoary past:

> It has been heard by us that there was a great risi of name Uddalaka. He had a son of name Svetaketu who was also ascetic of merit. One day in the presence of Svetaketu's father, a Brahmana came and catching Svetaketu's mother by the hand told her, 'let us go'. Beholding his mother seized by the hand and taken away apparently by force, the son, moved by wrath, became very indignant. Seeing his son indignant, Uddalaka addressed him and said: 'Be not angry, O Son! That is the practice sanctioned by antiquity. The women of all orders in this world are free (lit. uncovered – anavrita). O Son, men in this matter, as regards their respective orders, act as kine.' The risi's son Svetaketu, however, disapproved of the usage, and established in the world the present usage as regards men and women.[2]

The Vedic term samana seems to have originally denoted a horde. In Rks X.86.2-6, Indrāṇī complains to Indra that though Vṛṣākapi molested her (most probably forcibly enjoyed her) when she went to the samana (X.86.10), Indra was not prepared to give up his friendship for him. Later terms for samana were samajyā, samavāya, and samāja in which samāja was practically synonymous with the word samaja, meaning an assemblage of cattle:

> Pāṇini refers to Samajyā (a Saṁjñā in III.3.99) which Kātyāyana and Patañjali explain as a place where people flock together ('samajanti tasyām samajyā,' Bhāshya, II.152). . . .
>
> Pāṇini also refers to assemblies under the general name of samavāya (IV.4.43), which, according to the commentators, included samāja. A cattle fair was known as samaja (III.3.69), distinguished from a human assemblage (samāja), . . .Samāja and Samajyā appear to be synonymous terms, the first

of wider meaning including religious gathering also. Aśoka interdicted the popular samāja as not promoting morals.[3]

The horde or samana or samāja in course of time split up into two halves called moieties. Varga and pakṣa (Pāṇini's rule VI.2.134) were the terms used for denoting a moiety. Pakṣa means half. Varga retains its original meaning in the Pali canons. Buddha interdicted vagga-kamma in his monastic order.[4]

Vedic ritual literature has preserved the account of the rise of moieties in the form of the primal separation of the earth and the sky:

> . . .when the separation of the Sky and Earth, the act of 'creation' essential to life, but also involving death, had first been effected, 'The Gods all wailed, and called upon the Aśvins to 'Reunite them' (Punar ā vahatāt, RV.X.24.5). . . .[5]

A moiety is exogamous, meaning a man and a woman not from the same moiety, but from different moieties, can mate:

> . . .So 'The Gods let them together (samanayan, as the Queen is "led" in the Aśvamedha), and coming together, they performed this "Divine Marriage" (saṁyatāv etaṁ devavivāhaṁ vyavahetam, AB.IV.27) and as in VS.II.16: "Consent ye together (saṁjānathām), Sky and Earth, aid ye us with rain".'[6]

The tale of Kadrū and Suparṇī in the Taittiriya Saṁhitā (VI.I.6) is also the tale of the two original moieties. For Kadrū means earth and Suparṇi means sky. Mahābhārata (I.20-24) later turned them into the wives of the sage Kaśyapa and the mothers of the serpents and the eagles respectively. This latter tale might denote that the serpents and the eagles were once the totems of these two moieties. Totem means the food of a moiety (or clan) in securing which it has come to specialise. According to Thomson:

> . . .The initial function of exogamy was to circulate the food supply.[7]

The two moieties, by exchanging their surplus totemic food, diversified their food.

The moieties then split up into units called clans. Rg-veda and Atharva-veda know the clans by two terms – gotra and kula. Kane traces the origin of gotra as follows:

> The word gotra in the Rg. means 'cow-stable' or 'herd of cows' in a few passages (I.51.3, II.17.1, III.39.4, III.43.7, IX.56.23, X.48.2, X.120.8). By a natural metaphor 'gotra' was applied to a cloud (in which waters are pent up as cows in a cow-stable) or to a cloud demon and also to a mountain range or

> peak which conceals water-yielding clouds, Vide, Rg.II.33.3 (where Bṛhaspati's car is styled 'gotrabhid'), Rg.X.103.7 (=Tai.S.IV.6.4.2, Atharvaveda V.2.8 and Vāj.S.17.39), Rg.VI.17.2, X.103.6. In some of these verses it is possible to take 'gotra' in the sense of 'fort'. In some cases 'gotra' probably means only 'assemblage' (samūha), e.g., Rg.II.23.18, VI.68.5. From this last sense of 'assemblage' the transition to the meaning of 'a group of persons' is both easy and quick. There is no positive instance of the word 'gotra' being unchallengeably used in the sense 'descendants of a common patriarchal ancestor' in the Rgveda; but the concept underlying the idea of gotra was, it is plain, quite familiar even in the age of Rgveda. In the Atharvaveda V.21.3 the word 'Viśvagotryaḥ' (belonging to all families) occurs. Here the word 'gotra' clearly means 'a group of men connected together' (by blood). The Kauśika Sūtra IV.2 quotes a mantra in which gotra undoubtedly means a group of persons.[8]

Whatever might have been the conception of gotra in early Vedic times, in later Vedic times it came to mean all persons who were descended from a common male ancestor:

> The general conception about gotra is that, it denotes all persons who trace descent in an unbroken male line from a common male ancestor. When a person says: 'I am Jamadagni gotra' he means that he traces his descent from the ancient sage Jamadagni by unbroken male descent. As stated by Baud. . .from very ancient times these male founders were supposed to be eight. This enumeration of eight primary gotras seems to have been known to Pāṇini. Patañjali says, 'There were eighty thousand sages who observed celibacy.' The accepted opinion is that the spread of progeny was due to eight sages including Agastya. The offspring of these eight are gotras and other than these are called 'gotrāvayava'. . . .[9]

The term kula-pā, meaning head of a clan, occurs in Rgveda (X.179.2) and Atharvaveda (I.14.3). No mention of kula is made in both the Vedas in its uncompounded form.

Groups of clans in a moiety form bodies called phratries. The terms used for phratry by both the Vedas are pravara, jana, sajāta, and jñāti. Pravara is found only among the Brahmins. Kane defines pravara in relation to gotra as follows:

> . . .Gotra is the latest ancestor or one of the latest ancestors of a person by whose name his family has been known for generations; while pravara is constituted by the sage or sages who lived in the remotest past, who were most illustrious and who were generally the ancestors of the gotra sages or in some cases the remotest ancestors alone.[10]

It is thought that they might have been the phratries of the Brahmins:

D. C. P. R. I. Pune-6.

Brahmin gotras are grouped into larger units (probably corresponding to the phratry) by common *pravaras*. . . .[11]

Jana in the compound pañca-jana is one of the most widely used terms in Ṛgveda (III.37.9, III.59.8, VI.32.11, VIII.32.22, IX.65.23, X.45.6, X.53.4). Jana is used in the Atharva-vedic Ṛk XIV.2.59 definitely with the connotation of phratry. Kane provides the following information about the term:

> . . .In the Lātyāyana śrauta sūtra (VIII.2.8 and 10) it is prescribed that one who has given away everything in the Viśvajit sacrifice should stay three nights with niṣādas and may partake of their jungle diet and then again three nights with 'jana' and then the sūtra gives several views about the meaning of 'jana' one of which, that of Dhanañjāpya, is that 'jana' means a person with whom (i.e., with whose daughter) no marriage is possible while one who is sagotra is called 'samānajana'. . . .[12]

Whatever might be the changing notions about the unit, jana here clearly means phratry.

Sa-jāta, or its later synonym jāti, and also jana, are derived from the same root jan, meaning to be born. Pāṇini's rule V.4.9 hints that the word jāti, which already had come to mean caste and hence endogamous, must originally have meant phratry. Bhaṭṭoji, commenting on the rule, says that those who are bound by a jāti are called brothers. Vasiṣṭha in Ṛk VII.72.2 invokes the Aśvins as samānaḥ bandhuḥ. Jāti has preserved its original connotation in Indian philosophy. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas recognised the category of sāmānya or jāti, meaning universal or class. A cow is an individual or viśeṣa, and perishable, while the class cowness (gotva) inheres in every individual cow and is imperishable. Irawati Karve identifies jāti with kula, which is entirely wrong.[13]

Taittirīya Saṁhitā (III.4.8) prescribes rāṣṭrabhṛt ritual for winning over one's sa-jātas. In the Rāja-sūya the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā (X.29) invokes the dice in order to make the consecrated king fit to sit among his sa-jātas as their head. Atharva-vedic Ṛks I.9.3 and VI.54.2 are magical rituals for making a person supreme among his sa-jātas. The horse sacrifice Ṛks I.162.7 and 18 invoke the horse as su-bandhu and deva-bandhu respectively.

Jñāti occurs in Ṛg-veda (VII.35.5, X.85.28, X.117.9) and in Atharva-veda (VI.32.3, VIII.8.21, XIV.1.26). The etymology of jñāti and bandhu is given by Nirukta (IV.21), commenting on Ṛk I.164.44:

> . . .Relation [bandhuḥ] is so called from being connected together. Uterine is (so called) from being fastened together. It is said: children are born fastened to the umbilicus. Hence the near relatives [jñātīn] are called as having a common umbilicus, or a common tie. . . .[14]

Chattopadhyaya explains the words 'janānāṁ jāmiḥ' as follows:

> . . .In the Rig Veda, one of the words used for 'comrade' is jamih. Agni was addressed as jananam jamih, the comrade of all men. Sayana, on the authority of the Unadi Sutra, explains the words as follows: 'jamu adane', jamanti saha ekasmin patre adanti iti jamayah, bandhavah. 'The root jam means to eat', those who eat together from the same plate are friends. 'jamayah'. . . .[15]

Chattopadhyaya jumbles up two terms having different connotations. According to Morgan, members of the same clan or phratry called each other 'brother' and members of the same tribe addressed each other as 'friend' or 'comrade'.[16] The Vedic god Mitra seems to have been the deification of the tribal comradeship or mitra hood. For Mitra himself tells the gods that he is the friend of all.[17] Everything outside their own tribe was hostile to the tribal people, and hence Indra is again and again eulogised by Ṛg-veda as 'amitra-han', meaning killer of unfriendly tribals. Hence, the real meaning of janānāṁ jāmiḥ should be a 'phratry brother'.

Amara-koṣa (II.11.42) explains jñāti as a kinsman of seventh degree. Kane explains sa-nābhi, a synonym of jñāti, as a distant relation.[18] Vinaya-piṭaka defines 'aññātiko' as a person who is not related up to the seventh generation of the ancestors on both the paternal and the maternal sides.[19] Thus, a person could not be a jñāti if he was related in the eighth ancestral generation or beyond it. This Buddhist definition completely agrees with the definition given by the grammarians. Kāśikā on Pāṇini VI.2.133 defines jñātis as kinsmen on both the father's and mother's sides. It clearly means that a phratry was an endogamous organisation in contradistinction to moiety which was exogamous.[20]

Manu (IX.186) ordains:

> To three (ancestors) water must be offered, to three the funeral cake is given, the fourth (descendant is) the giver of these (oblations), the fifth has no connection (with them).[21]

It is customary in that part of Maharashtra where the author lives to break the agnate relationship, called cutting off the 'sutaka', literally meaning 'of the son', in the fifth generation. The author was told by the villagers with whom he made the enquiries that in the absence of

such a precaution of sutaka-vicchedana, with somebody or the other dying, every clansman would be permanently under the funeral pollution (aśauca).

Not only agnate-tie was severed with the fifth generation, but division of property also took place with it. Manu (IX.187) enjoins:

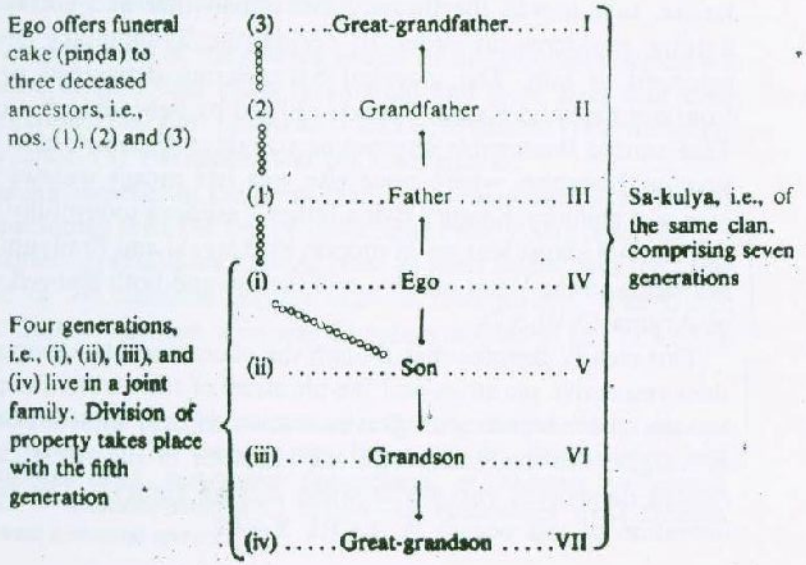
> Always to that (relative within three degree) who is nearest to the (deceased) Sapiṇḍa the estate shall belong; afterwords a Sakulya shall be (the heir, then) the spiritual teacher of the pupil.[22]

Jīmūtavāhana's theory of sapiṇḍa helps us to arrive at a clear definition of a clan, or what Manu calls a sa-kulya, meaning a clansman:

> . . Jīmūtavāhana does not set forth his theory of sapiṇḍa relationship with reference to marriage. His theory is that in matters of inheritance the guiding principle is the spiritual benefit (upakārakatva) conferred on the deceased through oblations of food, and he relies on Manu (IX.106) for his proposition. For his sapiṇḍa theory he principally relies on two passages, Baud. Dh.S.I.15.113-115 and Manu IX.186-187. Baudhāyana's words are 'the paternal great-grand father, the paternal grand-father, the father, the man himself, his full brothers, his sons, grandson and son's son from a woman of the same varṇa: all these participate in undivided dāya (heritage). Those who participate in divided dāya are called sakulyas'. . . .[23]

The sapiṇḍas and sakulyas will appear as shown in Diagram 1.

DIAGRAM 1


Ego offers funeral cake (piṇḍa) to three deceased ancestors, i.e., nos. (1), (2) and (3)
(3) ....Great-grandfather.....I
(2) ..... Grandfather II
(1) .....Father III
(i) .....Ego IV
(ii) .....Son V
(iii) ..... Grandson VI
(iv) .....Great-grandson VII
Four generations, i.e., (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) live in a joint family. Division of property takes place with the fifth generation
Sa-kulya, i.e., of the same clan, comprising seven generations

The differentiation of sapiṇḍa from sakulya was due to the break up of the clan system into joint family system. Seven generations lived in one household. In joint family system the division of property took place with every fifth generation.

In the eighth generation a clan split up, giving birth to a new clan. The person who established the new clan was called a kula-kara or kula-kartā. Yudhiṣṭhira was called the founder of his Pāṇḍava clan (II.61.3) which later split away from the parent Kuru tribe. He lamented before his mother after the great war (XV.26.32):

> The Pañcālas have been virtually decimated. Only a tale of theirs is left. I do not see anyone, O auspicious one, who can be their kula-kartā!

Anuśāsana-parva (4.49) calls Viśvāmitra gotra-kartā. The founders of the original eight gotras of the brahmins are called gotra-kārins.[24]

The term 'pañca-janāḥ' is explained by *Vedic Index*[25] as follows:

> . . .Who are meant by the five is very uncertain. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa explains the five to be gods, men, Gandharvas and Apsarases, snakes, and the fathers. Aupamanyava held that the four castes (Varṇa) and the Niṣādas made up the five, and Sāyaṇa is of the same opinion. Yāska thinks that the five are the Gandharvas, fathers, gods, Asuras, and Rakṣases. . . .

All possible solutions have been tabulated here, except that one staring in the face. The same term occurring in Rk VIII.63.7 is explained by Nirukta (III.8) as follows: '. . .with the tribe consisting of five peoples. . . .'[26]

The words used by Nirukta are 'pañca-janinayā viśā'. They literally mean 'five phratries of a tribe'. Such a tribe consisting of five phratries is mentioned by Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.12):

> 12. He was not yet developed. He created the Viś (the commonalty), those kinds of gods that are mentioned in numbers: The Vasus, the Rudras, the Ādityas, the Viśvedevas, the Marutś.[27]

(1) Śaṅkarācārya, commenting on it, says that Vasus are eight, Rudras eleven, Ādityas twelve, Maruts seven troops of seven each, and that the eleven Viśvedevas were sprung from Viśvā.

(2) Mahābhārata (I.96-100) narrates that the eight Vasus were born to the river goddess Gaṅgā, of which the first seven she killed as soon as they were born, while the eighth, Bhiṣma, she preserved only due to the entreaties of her mortal husband-king Śantanu.

(3) Taittirīya Saṁhitā (IV.1.2) styles the followers of Rudra as

'gāṇa-patyas', i.e., belonging to gaṇa-pati, i.e., the chief of a tribe. The word gaṇa is also applied to a phratry; for Śaṅkarācārya, commenting on the above-quoted passage of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, says that the Viśas, or the members of a tribe, are not able to earn their livelihood singly, but by phratries. Hence, gāṇa-patyas also means phratry members. As explained by Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, the sects of gāṇa-patyas were matriarchal:

> . . .Anandagiri's Samkara-vijaya described many sects of the Ganapatyas, i.e., of the followers of Ganapati, . . . Anandagiri's description of them does not differ very much from that of the Lokayatikas described by Gunaratna, ritual promiscuity being a very prominent feature of both. In fact, Anandagiri told us in so many words that the followers of Ucchista Ganapati were but vamacaries, i.e., Tantrikas.[28]

Ṛk VII.59.12 invokes Rudra as Try-ambaka, meaning having three mothers.[29] In other words, it means that a triune mother goddess was the phratriarch of the Rudra jaṇa.

(4) Ṛk VIII.96.8 says in clear terms that the Maruts were sixty-three in number. Rodasī, literally meaning heaven and earth, was, according to Ṛk I.167.4, the common (sādhāraṇī) wife of the Maruts. The Ṛk, as translated by Max Müller, reads as follows:

> 4. Far away the brilliant, untiring Maruts cling to their young maid, as if she belonged to them all; but the terrible ones did not drive away Rodasī (the lightning), for they wished her to grow their friend.[30]

Vasiṣṭha, the first Brahman priest, chants the Ṛk VII.58.1 invoking the phratry of Maruts as descended from Nirṛti.

(5) The Ādityas were the sons of Aditi, who later became the mother of all gods.

The Aryans being pastorals and hence patriarchal their pantheon was male-dominated, and they traced their descent mainly through males. Hence, this divine tribe, which was but the pale reflection of the human tribe, consisting of one hundred and seven clans organised into five phratries, must have been pre-Aryan or non-Aryan.

It is thus that several such phratries made a tribe. The terms used by both the Vedas for tribe are viś and gaṇa. Ṛks III.34.2, IV.4.3, IV.37.1, V.3.5, V.56.1, VI.14.2, VI.21.4, VII.41.1, X.84.4, X.91.2, X.173.1, 4, 6 use the term viś, while Ṛks I.6.8, II.23.1, III.26.6, IV.50.5, V.46.12, V.53.11, V.79.5, VI.40.1, X.12.9, X.34.12 use the word gaṇa. Vasiṣṭha chants the Ṛk VII.55.5:

> Let mother sleep, let father sleep, let dog sleep, let the lord of the tribe sleep, let all kinsmen sleep, let this phratry that is near by sleep.

Grammarian Kātyāyana says that a body corporate of clans is called a tribe.[31] The Yādava tribe consisted of eighteen clans (II.25.35). The eighteen clans were organised into four phratries, namely, Vṛṣṇi and Kukura, Andhaka and Bhoja (XII.81.29; XVI.3.37; XVI.5.2). It is not known in what manner the eighteen clans were distributed in the four phratries. In the significant dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and the sage Nārada (X.II.81), the terms used, such as jñāti-vṛnda and saṅgha, apparently mean union of phratries, and the whole discussion is centred round the ways and means to prevent the disruption of phratries (jñāti-bheda). But what Kṛṣṇa feared came to pass. The inexorable 'fate' worked its way through Kṛṣṇa himself. In the great Bhārata war Kṛṣṇa and Sātyaki sided with the Pāṇḍavas, while the Bhoja Kṛtavarman joined the Kauravas. The supposed extinction of the Yādavas did not take place due to mutual indiscriminate slaughter, but by a civil war between two factions (pakṣa, XII.81.27) comprised the Andhaka and Bhoja phratries on the one side and the Vṛṣṇi and Kukura phratries on the other (XVI.3.30, 34). The root cause as well as the immediate provocation of jñāti-bheda was economic – the Syamantaka jewel, which spawned wealth. On that fateful day of the festive gathering of the tribe on the coast of the Arabian sea, Sātyaki disclosed to Satyabhāmā, the favourite wife of Kṛṣṇa, that it was the Bhoja Kṛtavarman that had got her father Satrājit murdered in order to secure the Syamantake jewel that belonged to him. The incensed Satyabhāmā demanded vengeance from her husband Kṛṣṇa. Sātyaki obliged by beheading Kṛtavarman. That started the terrible internecine slaughter. When Arjuna came to succour Dvāraka, where none else was left except widows and old men and children, Kṛṣṇa's dying father Vasudeva mournfully told him that the holocaust was set in motion by Sātyaki and Pradyumna, both belonging to the Vṛṣṇi phratry and faction and both beloved disciples of Arjuna (XVI.6.7).

This clearly denotes that though the clans were the components of their respective phratries and the phratries of their tribe, the phratries had an innate tendency to gravitate towards their moieties or pakṣas or vargas. Morgan states that the phratries of the American tribes ranged themselves varga-wise when playing games.[32] The earliest illustration of this occurs in the Ṛk X.34.8:

D. C. P. R. L. Pune-6.

Fifty-three-wise play the moieties (of lot-holders). As the divine moieties do not submit to the wrath of the god Savitṛ (sun) of the true laws, the (mortal) moieties do not submit to the wrath of the (priest) king. It is he, on the contrary, that pays homage to them.

One hundred and seven clans constituted the so-called divine tribe of five phratries. They seemed to have ranged themselves into vrātas or vargas of fifty-three, when they played their national games at the tribal festivals.

Before the Kuru tribe of the Bharata people split into the two tribes of the Kauravas comprising hundred clans and the Pāṇḍavas comprising five clans, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas formed the two great vargas of one Kuru tribe. The epic in its present form is the account of the initial varga struggle and then of the inter-tribal war. The Ādi-parva (133-137) gives a vivid account of one of these varga struggles. After being trained at arms by Droṇa, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas demonstrated their skill at arms in a great samāja of the Kuru tribe (I.133.10, 18). The show culminated in a duel between the cousins, Duryodhana and Bhīma, while a duel between Karṇa and Arjuna was avoided.

Such varga fights also took place in the samājas of the Khattiya oligarchies of Buddha's time:

...In the tournament in which the young prince Gotama participated, his only opponents were the young Khattiyas. Similarly, on his return from military training from Taxila, the young Bandhula demonstrates his skill at arms by fighting against only his (Malla) cousins....[33]

The original tribe of the Kerala people of the Brahman period was constituted of sixty-four clans (grāmams) and these sixty-four clans were organised into four phratries (kalakams) called (1) Perinchellūr, (2) Payyanūr, (3) Parappūr, and (4) Chengannūr.[34]

The primal moieties of the horde (samāja) were preserved by Kerala more tenaciously than the rest of India. One moiety was comprised of the clansmen (grāmakkārs) having boar as their totem, and the other consisted of the clansmen having eagle as their totem.[35] The Dutch Jacobus Canter Visscher, who was Chaplain at Cochin in 1717-1723, records:

The adherents of the two parties are called the Pandelakoers and the Chodderakoers: .... The trumpet was blown by the Pandelakoers and Chodderakoers often summoned the princes of Malabar to mutual hostilities.... Cheramperoumal's...reason for establishing these factions was to create a martial spirit....[36]

In Onam, the greatest festival of the Malayalis, sham varga fights took place all over the country:

...Every year during the Ōṇam festival, sham fights were arranged throughout the country, when the adult members of the (Nayar) community ranged themselves into two parties under their respective leaders, and tried their strength in the open field. Large crowds used to gather to witness the combat, and even Nayar ladies, attired in gay apparel and decked with jewels, graced the occasion, bestowing smiles on the winning party....[37]

In the funeral ceremony of a clan chief the phratries acted in the varga manner, which will be described later. How the American tribes sat in their motehalls varga-wise is described by Morgan as follows:

...At a council of the tribe the sachems and chiefs in each phratry usually seated themselves on opposite sides of an imaginary council fire, and the speakers addressed the two opposite bodies as the representatives of the phratries....[38]

V.S. Agrawala has brought together all references to varga system by the grammarians:

...Pāṇini refers to dvandva denoting two rival parties, and to vyutkramaṇa denoting their rivalry for power (VIII.1.15). The kāśikā explains it as the division of members into parties sitting separately in the House (dvivarga-sambandhena pṛthagavasthitā dvandvaṁ vyutkrāntā ityuchyante, VIII.1.15). There were three terms to denote a party member, viz. (1) vargya (IV.3.54), (2) grihya, and (3) pakshya (III.1.119). Vagga as a technical term of the Saṁgha vocabulary had the same Pāṇinian meaning and denoted a party, as shown by Buddha's teaching (sukhā saṁghassa sāmaggī...neva bhikkhave vaggena saṁgha-kammaṁ kātavyaṁ (Mahāvagga). The party was named after its leader (Vargādayaścha, VI.2.131), e.g. Vāsudeva-vargya, Vāsudeva-pakshya, Arjuna-vargya, Arjuna-pakshya. Division of members out of allegiance to their respective parties was termed Vyāśraya (V.4.48; nānā-paksha-samāśraya). This was indicated by a special linguistic formation, i.e., Devā Arjunato 'bhavan, 'the Devas ranged themselves on the side of Arjuna' and Ādityāḥ Karṇato' bhavan, 'the Ādityas ranged themselves on the side of Karṇa'. The existence of party-system in the working of the Gaṇas is especially mentioned in the case of Andhaka-Vṛishni Saṁgha (VII.2-34). Patañjali in commenting on Kātyāyana IV.2.104 mentions the party of Vāsudeva and that of Akrūra.[39]

When the riparian civilisation of the Indus people grows into a theocratic monarchy, the vargas or pakṣas of the tribe turn into real classes. In the Taittiriya Saṁhitā (VI.1.6) Kadrū moiety is shown enslaving the Suparṇī moiety, while the Mahābhārata version (I.23.4) shows Vinatā instead of Suparṇī being enslaved by Kadrū:

Then that Vinatā lost the wager and having become a female slave, was engulfed in grief.

That is why Buddha thought it fit to interdict factional activities (vagga-kamma) in his monastic order.[40]

Pre-Vedic society was not a simple uni-tribal one. The pastoral Aryans had blundered into a far advanced civilisation. The famous Rks II.23.1 and X.112.9 invoke:

We invoke you, O brahmanas-pati, you who are the lord of the tribes, the paragon of seers, abounding beyond measure in food, the (priest-) king of the elders and the Brahman priests, take your seat where the sacrifices are being performed.

O lord of the tribes, take your seat amidst the tribes, you who are called the supremely wise among the seers; nothing nearby or afar is performed without you. O possessor of wealth, we extol the great and variegated sun.

The slaughtered horse of the horse-sacrifice also is addressed by Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā (XXIII.19) as the lord of the tribes.

Most celebrated sacrifices of the Vedic times were performed on the banks of the Sarasvati. Sarasvatī or Bhāratī or Vāk was the tribal goddess of the Bharata tribal confederation. Rk VI.61.12 goes as follows:

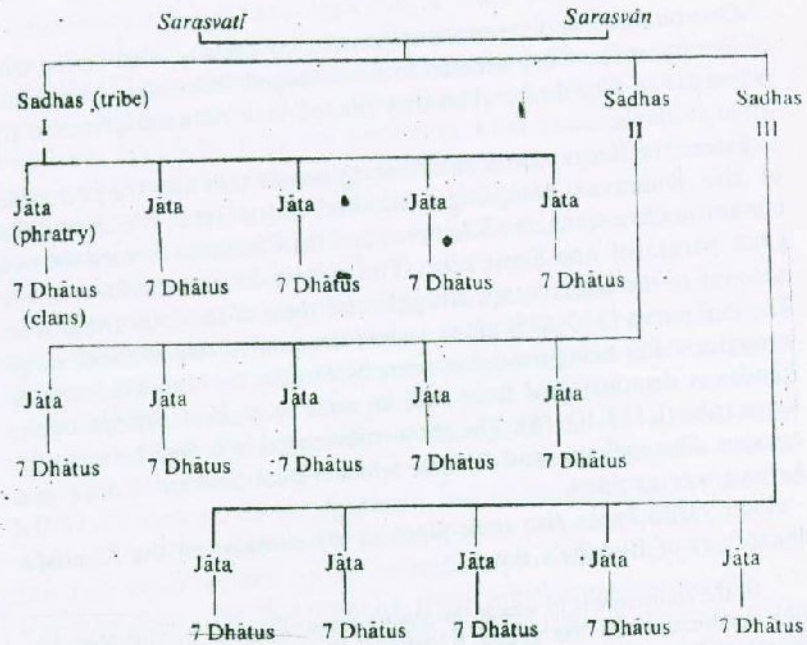
Let the triune Sarasvati, the dweller of three tribal mote-halls*, benefactor of five phratries, and having seven clan-roots, be invoked in every deed of might.

Diagram 2 represents this federation of tribes:

Kāsikā on Paṇini's rule V.3.116 states that the Saṅgha of the Tri-gartas was constituted of six vargas – (1) Kauṇḍoparatha, (2) Dāṇḍaki, (3) Krauṣṭuki, (4) Jālamāni, (5) Brahmagupta, and (6) Jālaki or Tri-garta. Here varga apparently is used in the sense of phratry. B.N. Puri thinks that the saṅgha took its name from 'three rivers' and locates it in the Jalandhara district of the Punjab.[41] The word 'garta' occurs in a compound 'garta-ruk' in Rk I.124.7. Nirukta (III.4) explains it as 'gartaḥ sabhā-sthāṇuḥ', which L. Sarup renders as 'one who ascends the pillar of the assembly room'.[42] Durga thinks it to mean 'dicing board' (akṣa-nirvapaṇa-piṭha).[43] The former meaning is not worth considering. As for the latter, the meaning should be modified to mean 'the dicing board of the tribal assembly hall'.

*Sadhastha, according to Nirukta III.5 and IV.II, means a dwelling place or a stable. Here it should mean a mote-hall.

DIAGRAM 2



Chapter IV will make clear the implications of this unique institution of ancient times. Suffice it to say here that 'sabhā-sthāṇu' was the characteristic of a tribe. Tri-garta thus means confederation of three tribes. Each of these three tribes was constituted of two vargas, and hence the six vargas listed by Kāśikā.

When was a new tribe formed? The most ancient and historical illustration that can be found is that of the Kuru tribe. The Pāṇḍavas formed a new tribe when the Kauravas tried to burn them down in the house of combustibles (lākṣā-gṛha) in the town of Vāraṇāvata (I.141-147). On way to the svayaṁ-vara of Draupadī, the Pāṇḍavas encountered the Gandharva Citraratha, who, after being defeated in the duel that ensued between him and Arjuna, advised his victor (I.169.97-80):

O son of Tapati, no lord of earth, howsoever brave, can establish a kingdom even in the land of his ancestral residence (abhijanena)*, if he is not

*Pāṇini's rules IV.3.89 and 70 deal respectively with the land which is one's 'nivasa' and which is one's 'abhijana'. Patañjali, commenting on the latter rule, says that

aided by a Brahmin (purohita).

Hence know this for certain, O glorifier of the lineage of the Kurus, a kingdom can be governed for a long time only if it is led by a Brahmin (purohita).

As will be explained later on, a matriarchal agricultural tribe was thought to exist and thrive only through the sacred marriage of the queen of the tribe with a Brahman consort. In a patriarchal tribal kingdom, the matriarchal reality was inverted, and now it could exist and thrive only through the sacred marriage of the priest-king with the Brahman purohita! The Pāṇḍavas could become a separate tribe *de jure* only when they had chosen the Brahman Dhaumya as their purohita-husband as advised by the Gandharva (I.182.2):

(The Gandharva answered Arjuna,) 'In this very forest and on the ford called Utkocaka lives Dhaumya, the younger brother of Devala. If you desire (to follow my advice) choose him in marriage.'

After doing so (I.182.9):

After being 'united' with the purohita as their teacher, the bulls of the Bharats felt as if they had become blessed with a husband.

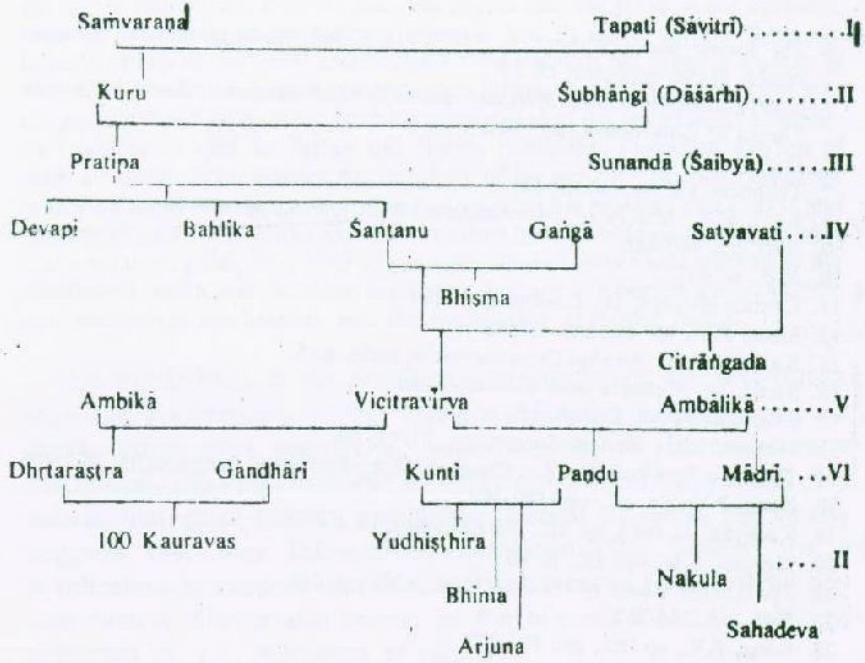
The founder of the Kuru tribe, it seems, was not Kuru, a male, but Tapatī the Sāvitrī, the daughter of the sun god Savitṛ; for the Gandharva addresses Arjuna pointedly and repeatedly as Tāpatya. She was a form of Sūryā, the eternal bride of the dying moon god Soma, whose marriage hymns (Rg-veda X.85; Atharvaveda, XIV.1-2) are still chanted in the celebrations of Hindu marriages. Sam-varaṇa* could espouse Tapatī only through the aid of his Purohita Vasiṣṭha; for, she consented to marry him not by the Gandharva or matrilochal form of marriage, but by the patrilochal one, i.e., if her father agreed to give her in marriage to him (I.171.19-26). It is due to his sacred marriage with his purohita Vasiṣṭha and then his patrilochal marriage with Tapatī, that Saṁ-varaṇa became the maker of the line (vaṁsa-karaḥ.I.95.37) of Kuru priest-kings. Excluding his unhistorical descendants, his line appears as shown in Diagram 3 (I.95.37-63).

Thus, as a kula split up in the seventh generation, so also a tribe split up in the seventh generation. The mother goddesses are said to be seven-Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and

'nivāsa means one's present residence, while 'abhijana' means land of one's ancestral residence.

*The word sam-varaṇa means 'one who wooes collectively'.

DIAGRAM 3



Cāmuṇḍā.[44] The gotra-maker (gotrakartā) sages were seven – Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, and Kaśyapa.[45]

Ṛsabha, the first priest-king of the Kosalas, according to the Jaina tradition, was the seventh in the line of clan-makers (kulakaras). And Savitrī told the divine priest-king of the tribe of fathers (pitr-rāja) Yama that she had become his tribal friend by walking with him seven steps (III.297.23):

Learned men who are the revealers of the real nature of things, have declared that (tribal) friendship (maitram, mitratā) is (attained by walking) seven steps (even with a mortal). On the strength of this (tribal) friendship, I urge you to give heed to the little that I wish to speak to you!

References

1. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I, pp. 44, 58.
2. Ray, P.C., *The Mahabharata* (tr.), Vol. I, p. 356.
3. Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Panini*, pp. 157-158.

4. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, p. 266; *Kashyap, J., (ed.), Vinaya-piṭaka, Mahāvagga-pāli*, IX.3.8.
5. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in Indian Theory of Government*, pp. 64-65.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Thomson, G., *op. cit.*, p. 44.
8. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. i., pp. 480-481.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 483-486.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 497.
11. Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, p. 209.
12. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 480-481.
13. Karve, Iravati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 5.
14. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇtu and Nirukta*, p. 66.
15. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 54.
16. Morgan, L.H., *Ancient Society*, pp. 71-72, 90.
17. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VI.4.8.1; Chanana, D.R., *Ṛg-bhāṣya Saṅgraha*, pp. 402-403.
18. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 501-502.
19. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, *Pārājika-pāli*, IV.4.47.
20. Morgan, L.H., *op. cit.*, p. 90.
21. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 366.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 366-367.
23. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 472-473.
24. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 208.
25. *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, pp. 466-467.
26. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 42.
27. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 84.
28. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 129.
29. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School Entitled Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, H.O.S., Vol. XVIII, p. 118.
30. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXII, p. 272.
31. Jayaswal, K.P., *Hindu Polity*, p. 77.
32. Morgan, L.H., *op. cit.*, p. 74.
33. Chanana, D.R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, p. 41.
34. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, p. 38.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 470.
38. Morgan, L.H., *op. cit.*, p. 95.
39. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, p. 431.
40. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, *Mahāvagga-pāli*, IX.3.8.
41. Puri, B.N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 79.
42. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.
44. *Amara-kośa*, 70.
45. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 483-486.

3

Clan-Mother to Tribal-Mother

Kula and gotra were but the synonyms of clan, the basic unit of the ancient Indian tribal society, say some. The orthodox argument that gotra was an exclusively Brahminical institution and only later adopted by the Kṣatriyas, has up to this time been countered by the contention that it smacked of Brahminical communalism. But, when it comes from such a distinguished and scientifically objective sociologist as Irawati Karve, one is bound to have second thoughts before dismissing it outright:

> A great deal is written about whether the Kshatriyas had *gotras* or not. The above discussion makes it clear that the Kshatriyas did not possess *gotras*. The Kshatriyas adopted *gotras* in imitation of the Brahmin *gotras* in post-epic times, but the adoption merely amounted to adding an appendage to the family name and was not functional as in the case of Brahmins. . . .[1]

But because she equates kula with phratry, a fruitful investigation into the origins and development of these two institutions, both forming the basic units of the ancient Indian society, is cut short:

> Neither the *vaṁśa* nor the *kula* possesses the characteristics of a clan. Vaṁśa is a line of patrilineal descent. Kula is patri-kin based on locality. If a junior branch in a *kula* wandered away, established itself elsewhere and changed its name, marriage between it and the original *kula* could take place. The name of a clan is fixed. The *vaṁśa* and *kula* names on the other hand had no fixity. They were patronymics derived from the names of some famous ancestors and when a new hero arose he gave his own name to his descendants. . . .
>
> The *kula* may be called a phratry, a gebrüderschaft, which remained an exogamous unit as long as it was based on one locality. . . .[2]

Thus, according to her, both the institutions are identical in character, if not in origin, i.e., both are patriarchal; but, there is no conclusive evidence to show that kula at any time meant phratry. In order to arrive at a correct distinction between gotra and kula, we will

have to turn to ancient sources. These sources not only assert that the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas have no gotra of their own, but that they have to adopt the gotra of their purohita Brahmins:

> ...It appears from the Ait. Br. ..that in the case of kṣatriyas the pravara of their *purohita* was employed in religious acts where pravara had to be recited. This leads to the inference that most kṣatriyas had forgotten their gotras and pravara by that time. The Śrauta sūtras allow an option to kṣatriyas (to kings according to Āśv.) 'They may employ the pravara of the purohitas or all kṣatriyas may employ the same pravara viz. Mānava – Aila – Paurūravasa – iti.' Medhātithi on Manu III.5 states that the distinctions of gotras and pravaras concern primarily brāhmaṇas alone and not kṣatriyas or vaiśyas and quotes Āśv. Śr. (I.3) in support. The Mit. and other nibandhakāras rely on the first alternative mentioned in the sūtras and say that in marriages of kṣatriyas and vaiśyas the gotras and pravaras of their purohitas should be considered, as they have no specific gotras of their own. ...[3]

The occasion of the ritual declaration of gotras arose for both the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas at the time of marriage ceremonies, while for a Kṣatriya it arose also at the time of his consecration to kingship. It is significant that the option allowed to Kṣatriyas contains a name which is starkly matrilineal. Aila means, according to Rāmāyaṇa (VII.89.23-24), the son of Ilā, the queen of the Bāhlikas, while Mahābhārata (I.75.18-19) declares that Ilā was both the mother and father of Purūravas.[4] The patrilineality in this optional gotra system commences only with Purūravas. Different kinds of marriage ceremonies were prescribed by the law-givers for the Brahmins and the rest of the two higher castes and resulted in different situations for the brides of both the sets of castes. Baudhāyana prescribes that the following four marriage rites are lawful for the Brahmins – (1) Brāhma, (2) Prājāpatya, (3) Ārṣa, and (4) Daiva; the Āsura and Rākṣasa rites for the Kṣatriyas, and Gāndharva and Paiśāca rites for the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras respectively.[5] The main division, as far as the marriage rites are concerned, is between the Brahmins to whom belong the former four rites and the rest of the castes to whom belong the latter four rites. The Nibandhakāras make a significant observation to the effect that a bride who is married according to any one of the former four rites adopts the gotra of her husband, while a bride who is married according to any one of the latter four rites remains in the gotra of her father:

> The smṛti passages that condemn cross-cousin marriages are explained in a peculiar manner by the Sm.C. and the Par.M. When a woman is married in one of the four forms, Brāhma &c., she passes into the gotra of her husband, becomes a sapiṇḍa to the husband's family and so she is severed from her father's family (as to gotra and sapiṇḍa relationship); but when a woman is married in the āsura, gāndharva and other forms, she does not pass over into the *gotra* of her husband, but remains in the *gotra* of the father and her sapiṇḍa relationship with her father and mother continues. Therefore, the son of such a woman, if he marries the daughter of his mother's brother, would be marrying a girl who is a sagotra and sapiṇḍa of his mother. The Sm.C. and the Par.M. and other works say that the smṛti texts forbidding marriages with maternal uncle's daughter refer to a person whose mother was married in the gāndharva, asura and the other two forms, but not to a person whose mother was married in the brāhma and the three other approved forms. ...[6]

This explanation of the prohibition or permission of cross-cousin marriage inadvertently admits that the Brahmins who followed the gotra system were patriarchal, while the rest of the castes were matrilineal. The option allowed to the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas not only proves that gotra system was totally foreign to them, but clearly suggests that they followed a matrilineal clan system; for it is ridiculous to suppose that the lower three castes were without any clan system. This is also proved by Pāṇini's rule IV.I.147, which is explained by V.S. Agrawala as follows:

> ...According to Pāṇini, one's designation after the gotra name of one's mother (gotra-stri) implied censure (IV.I.147), because it was supposed that the mother's name would be adopted only in the event of the father's name being unknown (Kāśikā, Pitur-asaṁvijñāne mātrā vyapadeśo 'patyasya kutsā). ...[7]

But the explanation that to be known by the gotra of one's mother was derogatory is at variance with the metronymic by which Pāṇini himself was known:

> ...Patañjali quotes a kārikā describing Pāṇini as Dākshiputra (Dākshiputrasya Pāṇineḥ, 1.73) after the name of his mother who was of the Daksha gotra. Daksheya also would be Pāṇini's metronymic.[8]

V.S. Agrawala thinks that the popular opinion turned in favour of a person being called after his mother's gotra in the time of Patañjali (second century B.C.):

> ...But there seems to have been a change later on and Patañjali states that there is honour in being addressed by the mother's name, as Gārgīmāta, Vatsimāta (Bhashya, VII.3.107; III.340 matrinam matach putrārtham arhate).[9]

But the usage of considering it a sign of distinction to be called by

one's mother's name or gotra goes back at least to the earliest Upaniṣadic times. All the teachers of the Vājasaneyi school recorded by Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (VI.5.4) are known by their metronymics, and Śaṅkarācārya comments that the predominance of woman gave rise to meritorious sons.

Again, we find that the village and the tribe (saṅgha) to which Pāṇini belonged were named Dākṣikūla.[10] Kula according to Pāṇini VI.2.129 means a village.[11] Kula also means bank of a river. Nirukta (IX.26) pronounces kula also as kūla which means a clan. Pramaganda, the king of the non-Aryan Kīkaṭas, mentioned by the Ṛk III.53.14, is described by the Nirukta (VI.32) as 'atyanta-kusīdi-kulīnaḥ'. The epithet is incorrectly rendered by Yāska as 'born in the family of great usurers'.[12] Kusīdin, according to Taittiriya saṁhitā (III.3.8.3), originally meant worshipper of mother earth, for Yamī is invoked there as kusīdam or earth. Hence, 'atyanta-kusīdi-kulīnaḥ' should mean 'sprung from the most sacred earth-worshipping clan'. This rendering receives support from the meaning Tiru-vanchik-kulam, the capital of the ancient Chera (Kerala) kingdom, situated near modern Crāṅganūr. According to Padmanabh Menon, Tiru means prosperous and Vanchi was the name of the country (most probably named after the Kṣatriya tribe as laid down by the Pāṇinian rule IV.1.168). Kulam evidently refers to the residence of the ruling clan.[13]

Gotra, as already explained, literally means a cowpen, indicating pastoral connection. Law-giver Baudhāyana declares that the study of the Veda, the avocation of the Brahmins, and agriculture, the pursuit prescribed for the Vaiśyas, are incompatible with each other, and the Dharmaśāstras declare with one voice that the upper two castes should resort to agriculture only in extreme distress.[14]

Kula, on the contrary, had organic connection with agriculture and the magical technique of agriculture, tantrism. Nirukta (VI.22) gives the etymology of kula as follows:

> . . .kula (family) is derived from (the root) kuṣ (to knead), it is kneaded.[15]

Kula is likened to kneaded or cultivated mass of earth. Nirukta (VI.26) explains the epithet of the river Vitastā as mahākūlā,* meaning having mighty or high banks.[16] Kūla here is also pronounced as kula.

*One of the epithets of the mother goddess Durgā is 'Karalā', a synonym of Mahā-kūlā.

Hence, the compound mahā-kūlā also should means a river having great masses of cultivated earth. Patañjali, commenting on Pāṇini VII.3.1, informs that rice was grown on the banks of the river Devikā. R.S. Sharma observes:

> On account of the comparative inadequacy of the artificial means of irrigation the chief hope of the peasants lay in the inundation of their land by the flooded rivers during the rainy season. Some indication of this is to be found in a grammatical illustration which informs us that the banks of the Devika river were specially suitable for growing paddy crops. . . .[17]

Commenting on Pāṇini I.1.24, Patañjali speaks of the canals that irrigated the rice fields as kulyas.[18] Pāli has a significant term for canal, namely, mātikā. Buddha speaks of fields blessed with canals.[19] Commentator Buddhaghosa defines mātikā as 'mother'. Early Buddhist philosophy used it as a synonym for cause, mother of effect.[20]

Kulya also meant a winnowing basket and a measure of corn equal to 8 droṇas or 16 maunds.[21]

Manu (VII.119) enjoins that a king should remunerate the services of the lords of ten and twenty-five villages with one and five kulas of land respectively. George Bühler gives various conjectures of the commentators about the area of kula land:

> Kulam, (as much land as suffices for one) family, is really a technical term which Medh. explains by ghaṇṭa,* a term known in some districts. Gov., Kull., Nār., and Ragh. state that it is the double of a 'middling plough', i.e., as much as can be cultivated with twelve oxen, while Nand. interprets it by 'the share of one cultivator'.[22]

V.S. Agrawala thinks that kula was equivalent to two plough lands.[23] R.S. Sharma agrees with S.K. Matty's conclusion that a kula was equal to fourteen acres.[24] Modern scholars are at one with the commentators of Manu in taking for granted that kula meant a (joint) family and that kula land was a (joint) family holding. Even if we agree with this interpretation, it is ridiculous to suppose that a lord of ten villages was expected to be endowed, and to be satisfied, with just a paltry piece of fourteen acres.

Though Maity admits that the investigations of this problem by D.C. Sircar are the most thoroughgoing, unfortunately he rejects his finding in the matter. Maity summarises the finding of Sircar as follows:

*Durgā is also called Ghaṇṭī.

99374

In many parts of modern Bengal seedling rice is transplanted, and Kalidasa's *Raghuvaṁśa* shows that this was the case in Gupta times. Hence, Sircar assumes that the area of the *kulyavāpa* was that required for the transplantation of the seedlings produced from one *kulya* of seed. In the district of Faridpur, not far from the place of origin of some of the most important Gupta copperplates, one maund of rice is required to sow 3 bighas, while seedlings grown from this require 10 bighas for planting. Thus the seedlings from one *kulya* of seed would require from 128 to 160 bighas of land for transplantation. . . .[25]

A lord of ten villages was equivalent to a Desai or Desamukha of mediaeval Maharashtra. They enjoyed lands called vatani inams as Patils of the village from which their clans hailed. The land used to be one Cāhūra in area.[26] Jadunath Sarkar states that one cāhūra was equal to 120 bighas.[27] Thus, kula land must have been 120 to 160 bighas in area. This was the average area of irrigated land tilled by a clan.

The word kul-māṣa occurs in Chāndogya Upaniṣad (I.10.2), in the context of a famine in the Kuru country by a hail-storm. Śaṅkarācārya explains it as (despised) pulse (kutsitān māṣān). Kulattha or kulīda, considered the meanest variety of pulse in Maharashtra, used to be partaken only during a famine, and in normal times formed the food of animals. Nirukta (I.4) gives the etymology of kul-māṣa in this context: '. . .*Kul-māṣaḥ* (sour gruels) are so called because they are wasted away (sīdanti) in families (kuleṣu). . . .'[28] But, there could be no 'families' in the Upaniṣadic times, there being as yet no private property in land. Hence, kul-māṣa can only be rendered as the mean kind of pulse which went to rot in a clan.

Kula means a woman in tantra, and tantra is agricultural magic.[29] D. Chattopadhyaya defines agricultural magic as follows:

> Agricultural magic rests on the principle that the productivity of nature – of the female earth –, can be induced or enhanced by the imitation or contagion of the human reproductive function. Conversely, human fertility is viewed as dependent on natural fertility.[30]

Briffault has conclusively proved that agriculture everywhere in the world was the invention of women.[31] That is why the Vedic agricultural magic ritual called Sītā sacrifice was, according to Altekar, exclusively a woman's affair:

> There were some sacrifices which could be offered by women alone down to C.500 B.C. Sītā sacrifice, intended to promote a rich harvest, was one of them. . . . It is possible that the exclusive association of women with them was due to the theory that since they are intended to promote rich harvest and fertility, they should be performed by women alone, who are their visible symbols.[32]

Kauṭalya (II.40) enjoined that sowing should always be prefaced by the invocation of Sītā, the Vedic deity of agriculture.[33]

The Atharva-vedic hymn I.14 is supposed to be a magical incantation against a 'kula-pā' daughter (kanyā). Whitney translates kula-pā as house-keeper, while the same word in the Ṛk VII.72.2 is rendered by him as the head of a family.[34] The generally accepted meaning of this term deduced from the former hymn and the Ṛgvedic hymns VIII.80, X.39, 40 is a spinster, or an unmarried woman constrained to keep the house of her father and grow old there. But, the literal meaning of the word is the protector or ruler of a clan. The Atharva-vedic Ṛks I.14.2 and 3 go as follows:

> O king (Soma), 'possessor' (yama) of this maiden, copulate with this bride (of yours). Let her be bound to the house of her mother, brother and father. She is the head of your clan, O king; we make her over to you. Let her stay long with her fathers, so that their heads may be sown (with hairs or crops).

That the head was likened to the kula land becomes clear by the invocation addressed to Indra by Apālā Ātreyī, also a kula-pā, in the Ṛk VIII.91.5:

> O Indra, cause to sprout again three places, these which I declare – My father's head, his cultured field, and this the part below my waist.[35]

It means that the head of a kula was a woman, who, as the priestess of the clan, performed agricultural magic in order to ensure and promote the fertility and productivity of the kula land. The law-givers knew kula-pā by the name brahma-vādinī:

> . . .The Hārita dharmasūtra as quoted in the Sm.C. and other digests says 'there are two sorts of women, those that are brahmavādinīs (i.e. students of sacred lore) and those that are sadyovadhūs (i.e. who straightaway marry). Out of these brahmavādinīs have to go through upanayana, keeping fire, vedic study and begging in one's house (i.e. under the parental roof). . . .'[36]

The kula-pā turns into a despised and unchaste woman with the period of the compilation of the grammatical rules by Pāṇini. For, in his rule IV.1.127, kulatā means a loose woman. What caused her fall from her exalted position? Kāśikā answers that in wandering from clan to clan she loses her chastity. But, the exalted past is not effaced entirely. Bhaṭṭoji comments that kulatā, a woman who moved from

clan to clan, was also a saint (satī), a nun (bhikṣukī).[37] We have such a nun, though fixed to a particular kula, in the Buddhist monastic order. A Buddhist nun who obtained her quota of alms only from one clan and had no need to resort to several clans, was called a kulūpikā. The nun Thullanandā was one of them.[38]

The etymology of kulaṭā as given by Kāśikā is 'kulāny aṭati iti kula-ṭā', meaning a woman who roams from clan to clan. *The formation of such a word itself denotes that a clan-mother has been transformed into a phratry-mother.*

One of the favourite similae of Buddha was that of the tale of janapada-kalyāṇī.[39] We can gather from this account that great crowds used to gather when a janapada-kalyāṇī gave a public performance of dancing and singing.[40] Rhys Davids translates the term as 'the most beautiful woman in the land'.[41] Rahul Sankrityayana renders the term as 'the beauty queen of a country',[42] while Jagdish Kashyap and Dharmarakshita take it in the sense of a prostitute.[43] But the word literally means 'the cause of the prosperity of a jana-pada'.

The compound jana-pada, in the strict sense of the term, means the country of a phratry (jana). Jana-pada-kalyāṇī belonged not to a tribe, but to a phratry (jāti) of it. Buddha, to prove the falsity of the Brahminic conception of union with Brahmā, resorted to the simile of jana-pada-kalyāṇī in his discussion with the Brahmin Vāseṭṭha:

> Just, Vāseṭṭha, as if a man would say, 'How I long for, how I love the most beautiful woman in this land!'
>
> And people would ask him, 'Well! good friend! This most beautiful woman in the land whom you thus love and long for, do you know whether that beautiful woman is a noble lady (Khattiyī) or a Brāhman woman (Brāhmaṇī), or of the trader class (Vessī), or a Śūdra (Suddī)?'
>
> And when so asked he should answer 'No'.
>
> And when people should ask him, 'Well! good friend! this most beautiful woman in all the land, whom you so love and long for, do you know what the name of that most beautiful woman is, or what is her family name, whether she be tall or short, dark or of medium complexion, black or fair, or in what village or town or city she dwells?'
>
> But when so asked he should answer 'No'.[44]

Pāṇini's rule IV.1.168 states that a country receives its name from the name of the Kṣatriyas who reside in it. Though the Kṣatriyas lived in tribes or tribal confederations, they were but a jāti or phratry in their respective gaṇas. It has already been proved that they belonged to the matriarchal or matrilineal kula system. Hence, it was the female founder of the Kṣatra phratry of a tribe that gave her name to that tribe. Pāṇini's tribe is a case in point:

> The Dākshas are referred to as a clan organised into saṅgha as is apparent from the following examples in Kāśikā: Dākshaḥ saṅghaḥ. Dākshaḥ aṅkaḥ. Dākshaṁ lakshaṇam (IV.3.127). . . .[45]

Rk X.86.23 chants that a woman called Parśu gave birth to twenty offsprings. Pāṇini's rule V.3.117 states that Parśu was the name of a janapada and Pārśava the designation of the Kṣatriyas who resided in it. The same rule goes on to say that the Yaudheya tribe and its janapada came to be known after the tribal mother, Yudhā. It has already been mentioned that the five phratries of the so-called tribe of gods were founded by janis. The Śālva and Madra phratries were sprung from Bhadrā Kakṣivati. Examples can be multiplied.

In the Atharvavedic Ṛk invoking Aditi (VII.6.1), who, as we have seen, was a phratry-mother in the Pañcajana tribe of gods, is addressed as the mother of all the five phratries and the whole universe:

> Aditi (is) heaven, Aditi atmosphere, Aditi mother, she father, she son; (the phratry of) Viśve devas (is) Aditi, the five phratries Aditi; Aditi is what is born and is to be born.[46]

Here we have a clear example of a phratry-mother in course of time being transformed into a tribal mother as well as the mother of the whole universe like Prakṛti.

We meet the human tribal mother in the person of a gaṇikā. Yaśodhara on Kāmasūtra IX.5.28 defines gaṇikā as the highest kind of prostitute. One of the earliest known and the most celebrated was Amba-pālī of the Vajji tribal confederation.

According to the Kalpa-sūtra of the Jainas, the Licchavi (= Vajji) tribe was composed of nine phratries, and it formed a tribal confederation called Kāsi-Kosala by forming a league with the Mallaki tribe which similarly consisted of nine phratries.[47] Ancient Indian literature is not very strict and precise in using the terms denoting the various constituents of tribal society. The meaning of a particular term has to be understood only in its context. The Mallas were a separate tribe in the times of Mahāvīra and Buddha, and hence the term gaṇa here has to be taken in the sense of a phratry and not tribe. Rahul Sankrityayana thinks that the Vajji tribe (gaṇa) consisted

of eight janas in which the Videhas and the Licchavis were the most prominent.[48] B.N. Puri, on the basis of the information provided by the grammatical literature, states:

> Vṛji, in earlier times, formed a janapada consisting of the Licchavis of Vaiśāli and the Janakas of Videha [VI.2.42] corresponding to modern Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga districts in North Bihar. Pantañjali mentions them separately. The Vṛjis, like the Kurus, had the government of a family (Kuru garhapatam; Vṛji gārhapatam), but the Videhas are mentioned in the list of Kṣatriyas.[49]

Rāmāyaṇa explicitly states that the country bordering on Videha and situated on the northern banks of the river Ganges was ruled by Vaiśālika kings (I.45-47). Thus, the Videhas and Vaiśālikas were separate and independent kingdoms in the days of Rāmāyaṇa. Ajāta-sattu, King of Magadha and a junior contemporary of Buddha, is described by Dīghanikāya as declaring his determination to destroy the Vajjis or Vṛjis.[50] When Mahānāma saw a multitude of fierce and uncontrollable Licchavi youths standing in all humility before Buddha in the Mahāvana of Vaiśāli, he exclaimed: 'Vajjis will be (victorious). Vajjis will be (victorious)!'[51] Hence, Vajji or Vṛji was the name of the jana-pada as well as of the tribal confederation of the Videhas and the Licchavis.

Apte's Sanskrit-English dictionary has failed to take cognizance of the word vṛji. Kosambi identifies Vajji with Licchavi, and interprets the term as pastoral nomads settled down to agriculture.[52] Nevertheless, it is an admitted fact that the Licchavis and the Mallas both belonged to the non-Vedic fold.[53] Vajji might have been derived from Vajjā, one of the several varieties of playing with dice mentioned by Vinaya-piṭaka.[54] The organic relation of dicing with agriculture in its initial phase will be dealt with in the next chapter. Being an agricultural society, it is not impossible for the Vajji confederation to have been named after a phratry-mother of the same name.

It was a popular belief that the office of gaṇikā was the cause of the prosperity of Vaiśālī, the capital of the Vajji confederation:

> 2. Now a merchant from Rājagaha went to Vesālī on a certain business. That Rājagaha merchant saw what an opulent, prosperous town Vesālī was, how prosperous, crowded with people, and abundant with food, and the seven thousand seven hundred and seven storeyed buildings, and seven thousand seven hundred and seven pinnacled buildings, and seven thousand seven hundred and seven pleasure grounds (ārāmas), and seven thousand seven hundred and seven lotus-ponds, and the courtezan Ambapālī, who was beautiful, graceful, pleasant, gifted with the highest beauty of complexion, well versed in dancing, singing and lute-playing, much visited by desirous people, and through whom Vesālī became more and more flourishing. And the Rājagaha merchant, after having done his business in Vesālī, returned to Rājagaha and went to the place where the Magadha king Seniya Bimbisāra was. Having approached him, he said to the Magadha king Seniya Bimbisara: 'Vesālī, Your Majesty, is an opulent, prosperous town.... Through that person Vesālī becomes more and more flourishing. May it please Your Majesty, let us also instal a courtezan.'
>
> (The king replied), 'Well, my good Sir, look for such a girl whom you can instal as courtezan'.[55]

The custom of the kula-ṭā roaming from clan to clan was observed by Ambapālī. The account says that she did not receive her customers at her dwelling, but she went to the persons who paid her fifty kārṣāpaṇas for one night.[56] Manusa here should not be taken in the sense of an individual or member of a family; for though grammarian Patañjali, as already mentioned, recorded that the Vṛijis had 'a government of a family', grha-pati, literally meaning the head of a house, was far from having the sense of the head of a family. The grha-pati of the Vedic literature is explained by Kosambi as follows:

> . . . The term *grhapati* = householder does occur, with a special *gārhapatya* fire. In the *TS* it cannot refer to a small householder for whom the onerous sacrifices described would be impossible, hence must indicate the head of a clan or large household of some sort which might include a dozen or more families in the modern sense. Thus *TS* 2.2.1 : 'He should make an offering to Indra and Agni on eleven potsherds who has a dispute about a field or with his neighbours', has to be interpreted in the context not as evidence for the private ownership of land, but for disputes beginning to arise between neighbouring groups which could not be settled within the framework of a single tribe, by meeting in assembly, hence must have been between different tribal units on adjacent territory. The 'he' would mean chief of the unit, whatever the size may have been. Thereafter, large households remained the norm among the upper classes, down to feudal times and later. . . .[57]

A differentiation should be made here to the effect that the characteristic of feudal society is large joint families and not clans. A small clan may be smaller than a big joint family, but a small clan would nevertheless contain, as already shown, collateral relations of all the given seven generations. There were no grha-patis, in the sense of family heads, in the tribal states such as the Vajji, except the merchants, who were not members of these tribal states.[58] The basic unit of tribes such as the Vajji was still a clan and not a joint family.

When Buddha preached to the Licchavi youths the five rules (kula puttassa pañca-dhammā) that were to be observed by the clan members of the Vajjis, he enumerated the following careers that were open to every clan member: (1) Consecrated Kṣatriya king, (2) Raṣṭrika, (3) Pettanika (hereditary office), (4) army commander, (5) head of a clan, (6) head of a guild, and (7) head of a phratry.[59] Vaddha Licchavi came to tender his apologies to Buddha accompanied by his sons and wife, friends, and co-elders of the tribe (sa-mitta-amacco), phratry and clan brothers (sa-ñāti-sālohito).[60] The 7,777 palatial buildings of Vesālī containing parks and lotus-ponds – though the figure is evidently exaggerated as noted by Chanana[61] – can favourably bear comparison with the taravad clan house of the matrilineal Nayars of Kerala, a faithful description of which has been left to us by Ehrenfels.[62]

Hence, Ambapālī visited not heads of families, but heads of clans. If the prosperity of Vesālī was due to Gaṇikā Ambapālī, conversely, its doom also was in the hands of a gaṇikā. Bimbisāra's son Ajātasattu, failing to destroy the Vajjis in open wars, utilised the services of a gaṇikā:

> Later on, Kūṇika is said to have brought the courtezan Magahiya, and the ascetic Kūlavalaya together, which brought about the fall of the city of Vesālī. No sooner this was done, than Kūṇika entered the city and destroyed it. . . .[63]

Another account of Ambapālī, narrated by Vinaya piṭaka and Dighanikāya,[64] provides us with a clue to the cause of the sacredness of her office. When Ambapālī heard that Buddha had arrived in Koṭigāma near Vesālī, she rode out with her magnificent retinue to see him and invited him with his fraternity of Bhikkhus to their morrow's meal at her dwelling. On her way back she met the Licchavis driving their chariots to meet Buddha. To spite the Licchavis:

> . . .The courtezan Ambapali drove up against the young Licchavis, pole to pole, yoke to yoke, wheel to wheel, axle to axle. (4) And those Licchavis said to the courtezan Ambapali: 'How is it, Ambapali, that you drive up against the young Licchavis, pole to pole, &c. . . .?'
>
> 'My Lords, I have just invited the Blessed One with the fraternity of Bhikkhus for their morrow's meal.'
>
> 'Ambapali! give up this meal to us for a hundred thousand.'
>
> 'My Lords, were you to offer all Vesali with its subject territory, I would not give up this meal.'

> Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers (exclaiming), 'We are outdone by this woman (ambakāyā)! we are outreached by this woman!'[65]

The Pali text uses the word 'ambakāyā' which is rendered by Rhys Davids as 'woman', the which he explains in a foot-note thus:

> Ambakāyā, which Buddhaghosa explains by itthikāya, comp. the well-known Mantra, Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā 23.18 : Ambe Ambike Ambālike, &c. Probably the word ambakā is a contemptuous form intended here at the same time to convey an allusion to the mango (amba) gardens which Ambapālī possessed, and from which she was named.[66]

Two things strike the eye:

(1) Ambapālī *owned* the sacred mango-grove, which she presented to Buddha's monastic order. When no individual property in land had as yet developed in the Vajji saṅgha-gaṇa, the gaṇikā owned a big grove which she could dispose of without even consulting the haughty republican Vajjis. It should be noted that every city or village in those days possessed its own sacred grove. Ahalyā, whose son Śatānanda was the purohita of King Janaka of the Videhas (the foster father of Sītā), lived in a sacred grove (upa-vana) near Mithilā (I.48.11).

(2) Ambapālī is addressed by the Licchavis as Ambakā, which is a synonym of amba, meaning mother. Had she really been a courtezan, whose body was at the service of the oligarchic Licchavis, they would in no case have addressed her even in jest or contempt as 'mother'!

The conclusion is inescapable. Amba-pālī was really the tribal mother of the Vajjis, and her name was the designation of the high priestess of the Vajji tribe, literally meaning 'priestess of the mother (goddess)'.

The word gaṇikā itself originally must have meant the ruler of a gaṇa. For, the teachers of the religious sects in Buddha's time are mentioned by both the Buddhist and Jaina canons as gaṇins, gaṇa-dharas, gaṇa-ācariyās, and saṅghis, meaning literally heads of their religious tribes.[67] It is well known that Buddha's saṅgha was modelled after and administered on tribal model.[68] Mahāvīra's Jaina monastic order was a faithful replica of the Vajji confederation. Mahāvīra was the son of a phratriarch of the Videha tribe; hence he was called a ṇāya (Sanskrit jñātṛ), son of a phratriarch (ṇāya-putta), moon of the Kāśyapa kula of the phratry (ṇāya-kula-canda, ṇāya-kula nivvatta), a Videha, a son of the Videha tribe (Videha-dinna, Videha-jacca, Videha-sūmāla).[69] King Ajātasattu of Magadha, also a Vedehi-putta, was informed by one of his ministers that Mahāvīra, the naked one,

the son of a phratriarch, was the head and teacher of a religious tribe.[70]

Uttarādhyayana prescribes ten kinds of services to the Jaina monks:

3. There are ten kinds of service, . . .as serving the Ācārya, Upādhyāya. Sthavira, Tapasvin, Glāna, Śaikṣya, Sādharmika, Kula, Gaṇa and Saṅgha.[71]

These kula, gaṇa, and saṅgha were neither the constituents of a tribe nor the tribe itself, but the constituents or appellations of the Jaina monastic order. Mahāvīra's Jaina monastic order can be reduced to the pattern as shown in Diagram 4.

This monastic tribe developed gaṇas with kulas and śākhās after the gaṇi Ārya Suhastin.[72] Now, Mahāvīra's maternal uncle Ceḍaga, a Videha, and the king of the Vajjis, was of Vāsiṣṭha gotra. It was a law of ancient tribal society that only the head of a phratry could become a king; hence, Ceḍaga must have headed the Vāsiṣṭha or Haihaya phratry. Mahāvīra himself being the son of a jñātṛ of the Kāśyapa phratry, it is but in the nature of things that he should have been married to the daughter of another phratriarch. His wife Yaśodā belonged to the Kauṇḍinya gotra.[73] The gaṇa-dharas Maṇḍika-putra and Maurya-putra belonged to the Vāsiṣṭha and Kāśyapa gotras respectively, and the gaṇadharas Metārya and Prabhāsa both belonged to the Kauṇḍinya gotra. If we deduct these four gaṇadharas of three gaṇas evidently modelled after the Videha phratries, the remaining six gaṇas must have been the replicas of the Licchavi phratries. Shorn of all the religious verbiage, the Vajji confederation must have been as shown in Diagram 5.

Of such a great, opulent and powerful confederation Ambapālī was the tribal mother. But, it is because of this 'greatness' of the confederation that the office of gaṇikā had already been transformed from a tribal mother into the highest class of prostitutes. That is why the most beautiful and wealthy, most sacred and free woman among the Vajjis renounced the world and ended her meteoric career as a Buddhist nun, leaving to posterity one of the most remarkable songs of the Therigāthā (XIII.1).

Mādhavī, one of the main characters of the Tamil epic 'Silappadikaram', the gaṇikā of Puhar, the capital of the Chola kingdom, was born to a divine couple:

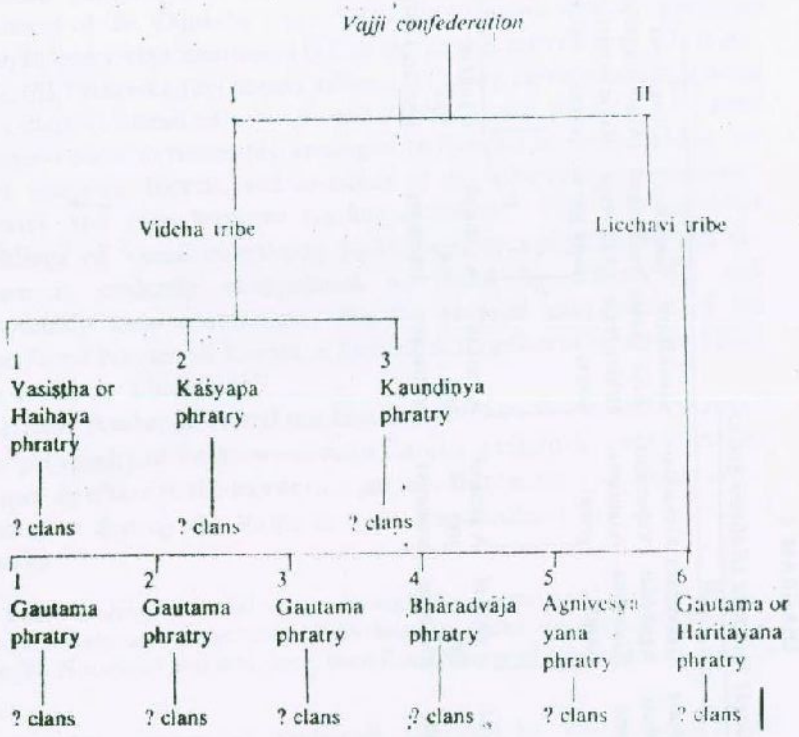
Agastya, the famous sage who dwells on the sacred mount Podigil, had once cursed the son of the god Indra and the nymph Urvasi for their

DIAGRAM 4

Saṅghī Mahāvīra (Kāśyapa gotra)

Gaṇadhara Maṇḍika-putra (Vāsiṣṭha gotra)	Gaṇadhara Maurya-putra (Kāśyapa gotra)	Gaṇadharas Metārya and Prabhāsa (Kauṇḍinya gotra)	Gaṇadhara Indrabhūti (Gautama gotra)	Gaṇadhara Agnibhūti (Gautama gotra)	Gaṇadhara Vāyubhūti (Gautama gotra)	Gaṇadhara Ārya Vyakta (Bharadvāja gotra)	Gaṇadhara Sudharman (Agniveśya-yana gotra)	Gaṇadharas Akampita Acalabhrātṛ (Gautama (Hāritāyana gotra) gotra)
A gaṇa of 500 śramaṇas	A gaṇa of 250 śramaṇas	Gaṇas of 300 śramaṇas each	A gaṇa of 500 śramaṇas	A gaṇa of 500 śramaṇas	A gaṇa of 500 śramaṇas	A gaṇa of 500 śramaṇas	A gaṇa of 500 śramaṇas	Gaṇas of 500 śramaṇas each

DIAGRAM 5



unseemly behaviour. But Urvasi was forgiven when she displayed her exquisite art on the stage. It was to this noble and adventurous pair that a beautiful girl named Madhavi was born. . . .[74]

She also ended her days as a Buddhist nun.

In feudal monarchies this once ruler of a tribe not only loses all the formal sacredness still ascribed to her in the saṅgha-gaṇas, but is converted into a *de facto* as well as *de jure* 'state slave'.

. . .it is clear that a girl, on whom the state invested a thousand pieces of money and who was then given training in fine arts at state expense (her teachers being maintained by the state), was under the complete control of the state, with regard to her earnings, her possessions, etc. The provision of 24 times the money spent on her as her release money, also seriously limited her liberty and brought her near a slave, though she could not be put to all sorts of work. Moreover, unlike the slave, she was never under one master. The provision for employing an old *ganika* in the king's service also shows that if she failed to come by a rescuer willing to purchase her liberty for

24,000 pieces of money, she was treated like any other woman-slave of the king. The provision of different sums of money for release of her relations (brother, etc.), strengthens this opinion.[75]

That is why Vasantasenā, the gaṇikā of Ujjayini, says to her female slave Madanikā in anguish: 'Had I been free, I would have manumitted gratis the whole of my slave retinue.'[76]

This tragic transmutation of the tribal mother into a courtezan gaṇikā is best represented by the Sāṅkhya Prakṛti, the cosmic mother, turning herself into a dancing girl for beguiling the Puruṣa, or the individual soul (Kārikā 59):

As a dancing girl, having exhibited herself to the spectators of the stage, ceases to dance, so does Nature, cease to operate when she has made herself manifest to the Spirit.[77]

References

1. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 82.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
3. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśástra*, Vol. II, P. i, pp. 493-494.
4. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 46.
5. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, pp. 205-207.
6. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, p. 463.
7. Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Pāṇini*, p. 189.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
12. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 111.
13. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, pp. 31-32.
14. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 124-126.
15. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 106.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
17. Sharma, R.S., *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, p. 99.
18. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.
19. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Aṅguttara-nikāya-pāli*, VIII.4.3.
20. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, p. 157.
21. Maity, S.K., *The Economic Life of Northern India in the Gupta Period*, p. 38.
22. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 235.
23. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.
24. Sharma, R.S., *op. cit.*, p. 103.
25. Maity, S.K., *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.
26. *Aitihāsika Patra-saṁgraha*, letter No. 229/25, dated 6-9-1785, from the records of the Bhosalas of Nagpur; Ranade, M.G. and Telang, K.T., *Rise of Maratha*

Power and Other Essays, Gleaning from Maratha Chronicles, p. 202.
27. Sarkar, J., *Shivaji and His Times*, pp. 350-352.
28. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 8.
29. Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, p. 278.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
31. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. III. p. 2.
32. Altekar, A.S., *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation*., pp. 234-235; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 333 ff.
33. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 270-271.
34. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, pp. 15-16, 436.
35. Griffith, R., *Hymns of the Rgveda*, Vol. II., p. 736.
36. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 293-295.
37. Sathe, M.D., *Vaiyākaraṇa-siddhānta-kaumudī*, P. II, p. 39.
38. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Pācittiya-pāli*, V.29.192-193.
39. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, p. 175.
40. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Saṁyutta-nikāya-pāli*, 47.20.23.
41. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, p. 175.
42. Sankrityayana, R., *Dīgha-nikāya* (Hindi trans.), pp. 73-88; also *Majjhima-nikāya* (Hindi trans.), pp. 321-325.
43. Kashyap, J. and Dharmarakshita, *Saṁyutta-nikāya* (Hindi trans.), p. 696.
44. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI. pp. 175-176.
45. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
46. *Mahābhārata*, I.120.
47. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, p. 266.
48. Sankrityayana, R., *Madhya-deśa* (Hindi), p. 18.
49. Puri, B.N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 82.
50. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI., pp. 1-2.
51. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Aṅguttara-nikāya-pāli*, V.6.8.
52. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 121.
53. Jain, H., *Bhāratīya Sanskṛti me Jaina Dharma kā Yogadāna* (Hindi), p. 18.
54. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Culla-vagga-pāli*, I.3.21-22.
55. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, pp. 171-172.
56. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, Mahāvagga-pāli, VIII.1.1.
57. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 112-113.
58. Chanana, D.R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, p. 158.
59. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Aṅguttara-nikāya-pāli*, V.6.8.5, 11; Jayaswal, K.P., *Hindu Polity*, pp. 77, 79-80.
60. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Culla-vagga-pāli*, V.9.24.
61. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 123 ff.
62. Ehrenfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, p. 61.
63. Jain, J.C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 383.
64. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, pp. 105-108; Vol. XI, pp. 30-34.
65. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 106-107.
66. *Ibid.*
67. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlakkhandha-vagga*, II.1.2.7; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, pp. 113, 273, 278, 284, 286, ff.
68. Jayaswal, K.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 42-44; Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 459 ff.

69. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, p. 194.
70. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, II.1.7.
71. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLV, p. 179.
72. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 290-293.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
74. Danielou, A., 'Silappadikaram' (English trans.), *Illustrated Weekly*, 27-9-64.
75. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101.
76. *Mrcchakatika*, Act IV.
77. *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 50.
78. Jha, G., *The Tattva-kaumudī* (English trans.), p. 157.

4

Dice and Agriculture

If the kula-ṭā roamed from kula to kula in order to discharge her priestly magical function, then the accomplishments in dancing and singing and their pubic display by the jana-pada-kalyāṇis and gaṇikās could not have meant just 'art for art's sake'.

This tribal mother we meet as an apsaras (nymph) in the hymn IV.30 of the non-Aryan Atharva-veda:

1. The up-shooting, all-conquering, successfully playing (sādhu-devinīm) Apsaras, that wins (*kṛ*) the winnings of the pool (*? glaha*) – that Apsaras I call on here.
2. The distributing (*vi-ci*), on-strewing (*ā-kir*), successfully playing Apsaras, that seizes (*grah*) the winnings of the pool – that Apsaras I call on here.
3. She who dances about with the dice (*?aya*), taking to herself the winning from the pool – let her, trying to gain (?) for us the winnings, obtain the stake (*?prahā*) by magic (*māyā*); let her come to us rich in milk; let them not conquer from us this riches.[1]

Apsaras here is defined by the commentator as a nymph who is the presiding deity of dicing (dyūta-kriyā-adhidevatām apsaro-jātiyām). Devin means a gambler, and devinī is its feminine form. The divine gambler is shown preparing (vi-ci) the dice and shuffling (ā-kir) them in a receptacle (glaha) (and presenting it to the assembled gamblers for drawing), all the while dancing. The game of dice looks like a modern cabaret and a gangsters' den both combined!

Atharva-vedic hymn VII.109 throws more light on the real character of the gamblers and the dice:

2. Do thou, O Agni, carry ghee for the Apsarases, dust for the dice, gravel and waters; enjoying in their respective shares the oblation-giving, the gods revel in both kinds of oblations.
5. He who made this riches for our playing, who the taking (?) and leaving of the dice – that god, enjoying this libation of ours – may revel a joint revelling with the Gandharvas.
6. Having good things in common (? *saṁvasū*) – that is your appellation;

for stern-looking, realm-bearing (rāṣṭrabhṛto) [are] the dice; you as such, O drops (Indavo), would we worship with oblation; may we be lords of wealth.[2]

The place of joint revelling in ancient society was the tribal assembly (sabhā). Atharva-vedic hymn VII.12.2 invokes the assembly thus:

2. We know thy name, O assembly (sabhe); verily sport (*nariṣṭā*) by name art those; whoever are thine assembly-sitters (sabhā-sadas), let them be of like speech with me.[3]

Hence, the gamblers were sabhā-sadas, members of the tribal assembly. The dice were invoked as saṁ-vasu, 'having good things in common' or communal property. The seer of the latterly quoted hymn (VII.12) chants:

Endow me with the same splendour and discernment as these who have assembled together. Make me, O Indra, a possessor of a share of this whole tribal assembly.

What does this share consist of? The Atharva-vedic hymn IV.33 provides the answer:

2. With desire of pleasant fields (su-kṣetriyā), of welfare, of good things (vasūyā), we sacrifice – gleaning away our evil.[4]

That is why the dice are equated with dust, gravel, and water (pāṁsūn, sikatā, apaḥ). The dice represented su-kṣetras, fertile fields. But, these fields were common property (saṁ-vasu). Hence, the bhāga or share could be nothing else than the kula share of the communal land.

The dice are also called rāṣṭra-bearing. Rāṣṭra in Kautalya's Artha-śāstra meant land of the people, while Sītā meant royal land. Kosambi correctly interprets rāṣṭra as tribal land.[5] In other words, it meant the communal land of a tribe. The Rāṣṭra-bhṛt mantras of Taittiriya Saṁhitā (III.4.8) were a ritual to gain a phratry or clan share in the tribal land. But the text has been invariably interpreted as a ritual to gain a kingdom or a village.[6]

But the dice described by the Atharvaveda are not the dice with which gamblers played. Pāṇini's rule II.1.10 provides the clue. It gives śalākā as a synonym of akṣa, i.e., die. Śalākā means a grass blade. The solution of this hitherto inexplicable problem is provided by the Buddhist saṅgha:

1. At that time the Saṁgha's store room was overful of clothes.

They told this thing to the Blessed One.

'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that they should be distributed by the assembled Saṁgha.'

At that time the whole Saṁgha, when distributing the clothes, made a bustle.

They told this thing to the Blessed One.

'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that you appoint a Bhikkhu possessed of the following five qualities, to distribute the clothes: (a person) who does not go in the evil course of lust, in the evil course of hatred, in the evil course of delusion, in the evil course of fear, and who knows what is laid by and what is not.

'And you ought, O Bhikkhus, to appoint (such a Bhikkhu) in this way: First, that Bhikkhu must be asked (to accept the commission). When he has been asked, let a learned, competent Bhikkhu proclaim the following ñatti (proposal) before the saṁgha: "Let the Saṁgha, reverened Sirs, hear me. If the Saṁgha is ready, let the Saṁgha appoint the Bhikkhu N.N. to distribute the robes (presented to the Saṁgha). This is ñatti. Let the Saṁgha, reverend Sirs, hear me. The Saṁgha appoints the Bhikkhu N.N. to distribute the robes (presented). Let any one of the venerable brethren who is in favour of our appointing the Bhikkhu N.N. to distribute the robes (presented), be silent, and any one who is not in favour of it, speak. The Bhikkhu N.N. has been appointed by the Saṁgha to distribute the robes (presented). The Saṁgha is in favour of it, therefore are you silent, thus I understand."'

2. Now the Bhikkhus appointed to distribute the clothes thought: 'In what way are we to distribute the clothes?'

They told this thing to the Blessed One.

'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that you first assort the clothes, estimate them, share them according to their higher or lower value, then count the Bhikkhus, divide them into troops, and divide the portions of cloth (accordingly).'

4. Now the Bhikkhus, who were to distribute the clothes, thought: 'How are we to assign the portions of cloth (to the single Bhikkhus), or according to their age (i.e., the time elapsed since their ordination)?'

They told this thing to the Blessed One.

'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that you cast lots, made of grass-blades, after having made every defective portion even.'[7]

The word used for grass blade is 'kusa-pāta'.[8] The monk in charge of lot-taking was called salākag-gahāpaka who was selected and elected by the saṁgha in the same manner.[9] The salākas used for taking votes seem to have been also coloured pieces of wood.[10] Thus, the dice or aksas originally were lots whose function was to apportion equally the communal property among the members of a tribe. The method of drawing lots will become clear by the procedure followed by the Buddhist saṁgha:

Now at that time there was a scarcity of food at Rājagaha. The people were unable to provide food for the whole Saṁgha; and they were desirous of providing food (to be sent to the Vihāra) for the use of a special Bhikkhu (designated by the donor), or for special Bhikkhus invited (by the donor in his own house), or for (single Bhikkhus) appointed by ticket (issued by the Saṁgha) (salāka-bhattaṁ kātuṁ)....

Now at that time the Chabbagglya Bhikkhus having received good food for themselves, gave over the worse food (which they had also received) to the other Bhikkhus.

They told this matter to the Blessed One.

'I allow you, O Bhikkhus, to appoint as apportioner of rations (bhatta-uddesaka) a Bhikkhu....'[11]

Then follows the same procedure of selecting and electing a monk to the post of bhatta-uddesaka. The account goes on further:

Now the Bhikkhus who were apportioners of rations, thought: 'How then are the rations to be apportioned?'

They told this matter to the Blessed One.

'I allow you, O Bhikkhus, to apportion them by arranging the food in small heaps, and fastening tickets or marks upon them.'[12]

Buddhaghosa's commentary further explains – A Salākā of leaf or bamboo or bark or strip of wood with the name of the donor written on it was stuck on the heap of the food sent by him for the saṁgha, and a replica of it prepared as a lot. After treating every heap of food in the same manner, the salākā replicas reserved as lots were put in a receptacle, shaken well for shuffling the lots, and then given to the assembled monks for drawing.[13] Here the bhatta-uddesaka himself seems to have acted as a salākag-gahāpaka.

These modern-looking republican practices of administrating the Buddhist monastic order (saṁgha) did not originate in the head of Buddha, as he is made to declare by the Buddhist scriptures, that it was he that taught the Vajjis the basic rules (dhammas) of regulating their tribal life. The incidence is described by the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta of Dīgha-nikāya. The Magadhan king Ajātasattu wanted to crush the tribal confederation of the Vajjis, the most serious obstacle to his imperialistic designs. But he had learnt at his own cost that no amount of frontal onslaught would gain his objective. Hence, he sent his prime minister, the Brahmin Vassakāra (Sanskrit Varṣā-kāra, rain-maker), to Buddha to seek his advice in that matter:

4. Now at that time the Venerable Ānanda was standing behind the Blessed One, and fanning him. And the Blessed One said to him: 'Have you heard, Ānanda, that the Vajjians hold full and frequent public assemblies?'

'Lord, so I have heard,' replied he.

'So long, Ānanda,' rejoined the Blessed One, 'as the Vajjians hold these full and frequent public assemblies so long may they be expected not to decline, but to prosper.'

(And in like manner questioning Āṇanda, and receiving a similar reply, the Blessed One declared as follows the other conditions which would ensure the welfare of the Vajjian confederacy.)

'So long, Ānanda, as the Vajjians meet together in concord, and rise in concord – So long as they enact nothing not already established, abrogate nothing that has been already enacted, and act in accordance with the ancient institutions of the Vajjians (porāṇe Vajji-dhamme) as established in former days –

' – so long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjian elders (mahallakā, Sanskrit mahattarāh), and hold it a point of duty to hearken to their words –

' – so long as no women or girls belonging to their clans (kula-itthiyo, kula-kumāriyo) are detained among them by force or abduction –

'– so long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjian shrines (cetiyāni) in town and country, and allow not the religious taxes (dhammikaṁ baliṁ)* as formerly given and performed, to fall in desuetude –

' – so long as the rightful protection, defence and support shall be fully provided for the Arahats among them, so that Arahats from a distance may enter the realm, and the Arahats therein may live at ease –

' – so long may the Vajjians be expected not to decline, but to prosper.'

5. Then the Blessed One addressed Vassakāra the Brāhman, and said:

'When I was once staying, O Brāhman, at Vesāli at the Sārandada Temple (cetiye), I taught the Vajjians these (seven) conditions of welfare (satta aparihāniye dhamme); . . . .'[14]

Buddha himself declares that the Vajjis abided by their ancient institutions (porāṇe dhamme). These seven dhammas were part and parcel of their ancient institutions. Morgan informs us that the Iroquois of North America regulated their tribal life by ten such dhammas.[15] The ancient Greeks and Romans were similarly guided by ten and nine dhammas respectively.[16] Immediately after Vassakāra had left, Buddha bade Ānanda to call all the Bhikkhus present in Rāja-gaha together in the service hall of the vihāra, and when they were so assembled, he preached to them as follows:

'I will teach you, O mendicants, seven conditions of the welfare (satta. . .aparihāniye dhamme) of a community. Listen well and attend, and I will speak.'

'Even so, Lord,' said the Brethren, in assent, to the Blessed One; and he spake as follows:

*The rendering of 'dhammikaṁ baliṁ' should be 'voluntary religious contributions'.

'So long, O mendicants, as the brethren meet together in full and frequent assemblies –

' – So long as they meet together in concord, and rise in concord, and carry out in concord the duties of the order –

' – So long as the brethren shall establish nothing that has not been already prescribed, and abrogate nothing that has been already established, and act in accordance with the rules of the order as now laid down –

' – So long as the brethren honour and esteem and revere and support the elders of experience and long standing (therā rattaññū cirapabbajitā), the fathers and leaders of the order (saṅgha-pitarā, saṅga-pariṇayakā), and hold it a point of duty to hearken to their words –

' – So long as the brethren fall not under the influence of that craving (taṇhāya) which, springing up within them, would give rise to renewed existence –

' – So long as the brethren delight in a life of solitude –

' – So long as the brethren so train their minds that good and holy men (who as yet have not come where they dwell [anāgatā]) shall come to them, and those who have come shall dwell at ease –

' – So long may the brethren be expected, not to decline, but to prosper. . . .'[17]

But a tribe could not be expected to make all of its decisions with unanimity. Differences were bound to arise and then decisions had to be made by majority, and thus by voting. It was also for this purpose that akṣas or salākās of different colours, denoting positive or negative votes, were utilised, and the officer in charge of this voting of a tribe in its mote hall used to be the salākag-gahāpaka.

It has already been shown that the bhatta-uddesaka himself had at times to act as the salākag-gahāpaka for apportioning the food rations by lots. The office of Bhatta-uddesaka was said to have been brought into being by Dabba, a former Khattiya member of the Mallas, one of the most ancient and renowned saṅgh-gaṇas of the time. Vinaya-piṭaka narrates the story thus:

Now at that time the venerable Dabba the Mallian (Malla-puttena), who had realised Arahatship when he was seven years old, had entered into possession of every (spiritual gift) which can be acquired by a disciple. . . . And when the venerable Dabba the Mallian had retired into solitude, and was sunk in thought, the following consideration presented itself to his mind: 'Arahatship had I acquired when I was seven years old. I have gained everything that a learner can reach to. There is nothing further left for me to do, nothing to gather up of the fruit of that which I have done. What service is it possible for me to render to the Saṁgha?' And it occurred to the venerable Dabba the Mallian: 'It would be a good thing for me to regulate the lodging-places for the Saṁgha and to apportion the rations of food.'

2. And when, at eventide, the venerable Dabba the Mallian had arisen

from his meditations, he went to the place where the Blessed One was; and. . .he saluted the Blessed One, and took his seat on one side; and. . .spake thus to the Blessed One:

'When I had retired, Lord, into solitude. . .the following consideration presented itself to my mind. . . . It would be a good thing for me to regulate the lodging-places for the Saṁgha, and to apportion the rations of food. I desire, Lord, (so to do).'

'Very good, Dabba. Do you then regulate the lodging-places for the Saṁgha, and apportion the rations of food!'[18]

History repeats itself, in this case, on a higher plane. When socialism penetrated in the most inaccessible Siatang country of the Great Ice Region of the Soviet Union, the same method of drawing lots was resorted to by the Russian Sho-Pir for dividing the village land, that till recently belonged to the Khans of the region, among their ex-serfs and co-religionists.[19]

That a certain pattern was followed in *demarcating* the tribal land into kula lots is suggested by the peculiar tailoring resorted to in making the robes of the Buddhist monks. In the initial two decades after the attainment of Gautama to Buddha-hood, the Buddhist monks used a set of robes called 'cīvara' which were made out of discarded rags stitched together. Cīvara were also called 'paṁsu-kula' or 'paṁsu-kūla'. Rhys Davids renders the term as 'out of (rags) taken from the dust-heap'.[20] But, according to Buddhaghosa, it meant robes made out of rags found in fields.[21] The following incident narrated by Vinaya-piṭaka will help us to understand the definition by Buddhaghosa:

1. Now the Blessed One had remained at Rāja-gaha as long as he thought fit, he set forth on his journey towards Dakkhiṇā-giri (the Southern Hills). And the Blessed One beheld how the Magadha rice fields were divided into short pieces, and in rows, and by outside boundaries (or ridges), and by cross boundaries.

On seeing this, the Blessed One spake thus to the Venerable Ānanda: 'Dost thou perceive, Ānanda, how the Magadha rice fields are divided into short pieces, and in rows, and by outside boundaries, and by cross boundaries?'

'Even so, Lord.'

'Could you, Ānanda, provide robes of like kind for the Bhikkhus?'

'I could, Lord.'

Then Ānanda provided robes of a like kind for many Bhikkhus; and going up to the place where the Blessed One was, he spake thus to the Blessed One: 'May the Blessed One be pleased to look at the robes which I have provided.'

2. Then the Blessed One on that occasion addressed the Bhikkhus and said: 'An able man, O Bhikkhus, is Ānanda; of great understanding, O Bhikkhus, is Ānanda, inasmuch as what has been spoken by me in short that

can be understood in full, and can make the cross seams, and the intermediate cross seams, and the greater circles, and the lesser circles, and the turning in, and the lining of the turning in, and the collar piece, and the knee piece. And it shall be of torn pieces, roughly sewn together, suitable for a Samaṇa, a thing which his enemies cannot covet. I enjoin upon you, O Bhikkhus, the use of an under robe of torn pieces, and of an upper robe of torn pieces, and of a waist cloth of torn pieces.'[22]

Rhys Davids comments: '. . .As an Indian field, the common property of the village community, was divided, for the purposes of cultivation, across and across, so must also the Bhikkhu's robe be divided. . . .'[23]

Paṁsu also means earth and kula means kula land. Thus the word itself means tribal land divided into clan lots. But the technical terms of tailoring used in making the paṁsu-kula had become inexplicable even for the great commentator Buddhaghosa.[24] In order to understand this strange mode of demarcating the tribal land, we will have to take recourse to the account of the non-Aryans as recorded by their enemies. Śātapatha Brāhmaṇa enjoins upon the sacrificing priests to banish Nirṛti, the goddess of evil, by consigning the black bricks representing her in a natural cleft in the South-westerly extremity of the sacrificial ground:

1. . . .Having built the Gārhapatya,* the Gods then ascended it, – the Gārhapatya being this (earth) world, it is this world they ascend after completing it. They saw nothing but darkness not to be seen through.

3. . . .While meditating, they saw those Nirṛti bricks; – they piled them, and by them dispelled that darkness, evil; for Nirṛti (corruption or destruction) is evil; . . . .

7. . . .They (bricks) are baked by (rice) husks, for husk belong to Nirṛti. . . . They are black.

8. With them they proceed towards that (South-western) quarter, for that is Nirṛti's quarter. . . . And anywhere where there is a self-produced hollow or cleft in the ground, he lays down those (bricks); . . ,[25]

Taittirīya Saṁhitā (II.5.1) narrates the tale of the origin of this cleft called 'iriṇa':

Viśvarūpa, son of Tvaṣṭṛ, was the domestic priest of the gods, and the sister's son of the Asuras. He had three heads, one which drank Soma, one Surā and one which ate food. He promised openly the share to the gods, secretly to the Asuras. Men promise openly the share to every one; if they promise any one secretly, his share is indeed promised. Therefore Indra was afraid (thinking), 'Such as one is diverting the sovereignty (from me)'. He

*One of the sacred fires maintained by the Aryan clan chiefs perpetually.

took his bolt and smote off his heads. . . . He seized with his hand the guilt of slaying him, and bore it for a year. Creatures called out upon him, 'Thou art a Brahman slayer.' He appealed to the earth, 'Take a third part of my guilt.' She said, 'Let me choose a boon. I deem that I shall be overcome through digging. Let me not be overcome by that.' He replied, 'Before a year is out it will grow up for thee.' Therefore, before the year is out the dug out portion of earth grows up again. She took a third of his guilt. That became a natural fissure; therefore one who has piled up a fire altar and whose deity is faith should not choose a natural fissure, for that is the colour of guilt.[26]

Keith translates incorrectly 'rāṣtra' as sovereignty. Rāṣtra, as already explained, meant tribal land. It seems that the function of apportioning the tribal land every year vested in the Brahman and the pattern he traditionally followed for demarcating the shares was irina. The conjecture is corroborated by the hymn of Taittiriya Saṁhitā which invokes the tribal land (III.4.8), of which a free rendering is given here:

The Mantras should be offered for one who is desirous of (succeeding to the function of apportioning) the tribal land; the rāṣtra-invoking mantras are the rāṣtra; verily with the rāṣtra (invoking mantras) he wins the rāṣtra – he becomes the rāṣtra. They should be offered for oneself; the rāṣtra (-invoking mantras) are the rāṣtra, progeny is the rāṣtra, cattle are the rāṣtra, in that he becomes the highest he is the raṣtra; verily with the rāṣtra (-invoking mantras) he wins the rāṣtra, he becomes the best (vasiṣṭha) among his equals. They should be offered for one who is desirous of (succeeding to the function of apportioning) the phratry land (grāma-kāmāya hotavyā); the rāṣtra (invoking mantras) are the phratry land, his phratry brothers (sa-jātāḥ) are the rāṣtra; he becomes the rāṣtra. He offers on the dicing place (adhi-devane); verily on the dicing place he wins over his phratry brothers for him, and being won over they wait upon him. . . . He offers on the self-made iriṇa for liberating himself from Nirṛti. . . .

Thus, the hymn identifies rāṣtra or tribal land with adhidevana or dicing board and iriṇa. The latter two words were indeed synonymous even in the early Vedic period. Explaining Vedic dicing, *Vedic Index* states:

No (dicing) board appears to have been used, but a depression on which the dice were thrown (adhi-devana, devana, iriṇa) was made in the ground.[27]

There are two days in Hindu calendar which are ritually devoted to gambling. One is the full moon day of Āśvina (September-October), popularly called Kojāgiri Paurṇima, and the second is the first day of the bright half of Kārttika (October-November), popularly known as Bali-pratipadā. We are concerned with the Bali-pratipadā.

In Maharashtra people used to say on this day: 'Iḍā-piḍā-ṭaḷo, Bali-rājā yevo', which is understood to mean: 'Let calamities go, and let the King Bali enter!' But, the word Iḍā in Sanskrit means food or the deity of food or the earth goddess herself. The compound etymologically should mean 'calamity upon food'. Hence, the Marathi benediction means: 'Let calamity upon food go, and let King Bali enter!'

Onam is the most important festival of the Malayalis, during which it is customary to play at dice by drawing a dice board on the ground. E.M.S. Namboodiripad describes the myth that gave rise to the festival as follows:

'Once upon a time, the whole earth was being ruled by Emperor Mahabali. He was a good, benign emperor, extremely solicitous for the welfare of his subjects. Peace and prosperity reigned in the land. There were no quarrels among the people; nor was there any inequality between one man and another. Everybody had as much of food, clothes, houses and all other good things in life as he or she desired.

'It was to such a good land and to its good emperor that God Vishnu came in the guise of a dwarf (Vamana). As in the case of every visitor, the emperor asked the dwarf what he wanted. The dwarf asked for that much of land as could be measured by his three steps and it was readily granted. The dwarf, however, turned himself into such a huge giant that the whole earth had already been covered by the first two steps that he took. There being no more space to put his third step, the dwarf put it on the head of the emperor and sent him down to the nether world.

'Now that it had become clear that this was not an ordinary dwarf but God Vishnu himself, the emperor bowed low and asked for a boon which was readily granted – that he should be allowed, once a year, to come up to earth and satisfy himself that his former subjects are still happy and prosperous. It was fixed that the emperor would come on the Thiruvonum day of the Chingom month (a day that falls some time between August 15 and September 15).

'The people of the earth thereafter decided that ten days before the Thiruvonam of Chingom, they would start making preparations to receive their beloved emperor. On the day of the emperor's visit and for three days thereafter, they will once again live as they had lived during the emperor's time. They eat the best food, put on the best clothes, entertain themselves with the most enjoyable dances, songs and games. . . . Nobody works on that day, even domestic servants being allowed to go home and enjoy themselves.'[28]

It was because the Asura emperor Bali maintained among his subjects equality in the shares of land that his subjects were happy. *Apportioning periodically the rāṣtra land equally among the tribal members was originally the most important function of kingship.* The

reality has vanished with Vṛtra and Bali, but the ritual of Raja-sūya or royal consecration has preserved it, though it has become unintelligible to the myth that explains the ritual. The Rāja-sūya sacrifice (VS. X.17-29), after initiating the king-elect to Brahman-ship (the significance of which will be explained later on), enjoins that the Adhvaryu priest should give the consecrated king five dice and a wooden sword called sphya. The king then invokes the sphya to draw a dice board on the prepared ground. After drawing the figure of a dice board on the ground, the king places the five dice upon it. The priest then calls upon the dice to make the king fit to sit among his phratry-brothers.[29] Iriṇa or dice board was the idealised pattern of the yearly demarcation and apportionment of the rāṣṭra land by the Asura kings.

Aśvaghoṣa, in his *Saundar-Nanda* (I.28-33), narrates a strange account of the origin of Kapila-vastu, the capital of the Śākya tribe:

> One day the sage Gautama wishing to confer prosperity on them flew up and bade the (four Śākya) princes:
> 'Follow without deviating the current of water that I shall pour on the earth from this pitcher containing inexhaustible water.'
> Then that sage, followed by the chariot-driving (princes), proceeded in the sky pouring (a line of) water in the region surrounding the hermitage.
> And (he) drew a pattern of aṣṭā-pada demarcated beautifully by boundary marks. Then coming to a halt the sage bade the princes:
> 'After my ascension to heaven erect a city on this region (according to the plan) demarcated by the line of water and the fellies (of your chariots).'

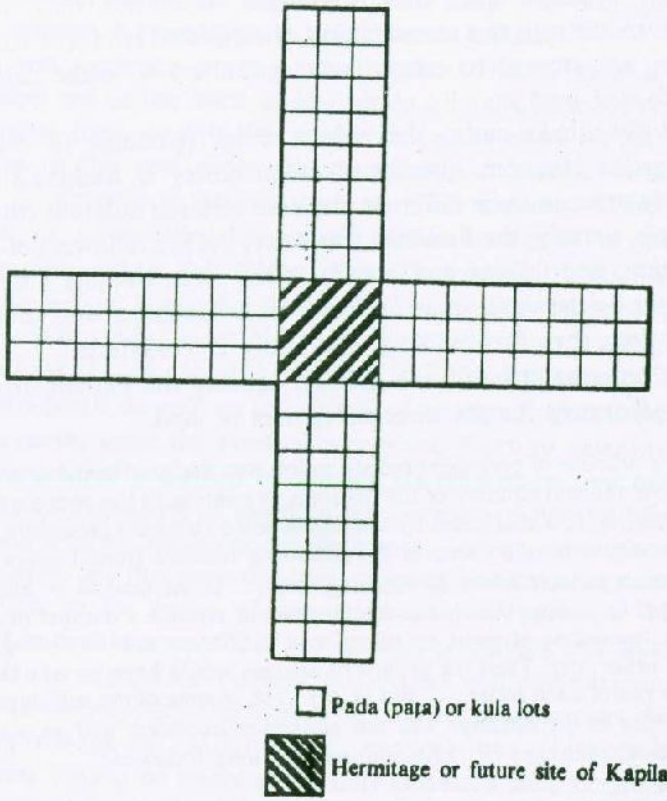
Indian dice board, called aṣṭā-pada, is as shown in Diagram 6.

Culla-vagga of Vinaya-piṭaka (I.3.21) records along with aṣṭā-pada another variety of dice board called dasa-pada or a dice board having rows of ten houses. Hence, it is logical to presume that various patterns of iriṇa were current along with, or before, the standard aṣṭā-pada.

Aṣṭā-pada is called 'cau-paṭa' in Marathi. Though pada also means a plot of ground,[30] pata has no such sense, and it primarily means a piece of cloth. The total number of houses (gharas) in an aṣṭā-pada are ninety-six. The original Maratha tribe consisted of ninety-six clans. Irawati Karve says:

> ...All those who are supposed to be true Marathas belong to ninety-six clans. The actual lists given by Maratha writers however generally contain more than ninety-six names. Among these ninety-six there are concentric circles of nobility and status. The highest are called 'Panchkuli' – 'of the five

DIAGRAM 6



clans'. These are the clans of Jadhav, More, Shirke, Pawar, etc. The next division is 'seven clans' which includes Bhosle and so on.[31]

We can only say at this juncture that the Maratha tribe must have been constituted originally of five or seven phratries and ninety-six clans. It has already been shown that the Indian dice board, before being standardised into an aṣṭā-pada, was in vogue in various variants, such as dasa-pada, etc. Hence, the four (and prior to it more than four) paṭas must have represented the phratries of a tribe.

Why were the houses in every paṭa arranged in three rows? Land could not be of equal fertility even in the region inhabited by one phratry. It was bound to give rise to inequality of yield, resulting in inequality among the clans in every phratry. Hence, the land of every phratry was classified into good, middling, and indifferent, and lots

were drawn for every class of land separately by the clan chiefs in a given phratry. The ancient Indians were not only completely conversant with this classification of cultivated land, but had for ages been accustomed to adopt their agriculture to these categories of cultivated land.

Asibandhaka-putta, the village chief (gāmaṇī) of Nalandā in Magadha kingdom, questioned the propriety of Buddha's preaching his doctrine in three different manners to three different categories of people, namely, the Buddhist fraternity, the lay followers of Buddha's religion, and followers of non-Buddhist sects. Buddha illustrated his answer by the simile of an agriculturist householder who sows his best field first, then the middling, and lastly the indifferent.[32]

In order to maintain the strictest equality the Pathan tribals drew lots separately for the three categories of land.

> The practice of periodical redistribution was designed to maintain so far as possible the real equality of the holdings in relation to the changing needs of the families. It was effected by lot, and in some cases the procedure was very elaborate, as may be seen in the following account from Peshawar:
>
> The areas were taken by drawing lots. . . . If the land to be allotted was variable in quality, the clan authorities would arrange a number of circles or series, consisting of good, middling, and indifferent soils or distinguished in some other way. Then the groups of sharers would have to take their lands partly out of each series. . . . But in any case, in spite of the soil classification, inequality in the holdings was not altogether excluded, and so a system of periodical exchange or redistribution was long followed.[33]

Thomson has reversed the sequence. Men first periodically divided the tribal land by lot-taking without any regard to its classification; for that knowledge is late in comprehension. Then in course of time the periodical distribution by lot-taking is modified by three separate lot-takings for the three categories of land.

It can now be safely concluded that the tribal land was first distributed among its constituent phratries and then the phratries distributed their land among their respective clans.

It is only on the basis of the foregoing discussion that the Ṛk I.124.7 can be understood. Lakshman Sarup translates it as follows:

> Like a brotherless maiden (a-bhrātā) who goes back to men, like one who ascends the pillar of the assembly-room (gartā-rug) for the acquisition of wealth, like a well-dressed wife longing for her husband, dawn displays her beauty like a smiling damsel.[34]

The Ṛk has not ceased to puzzle scholars right from the time of

Yaska. Kosambi is no exception and has the following to offer as explanation:

> . . . In i.124.7 *uṣā hasreva ni riṇīte apsaḥ*, she reveals her secret charms like a lascivious woman, or like a smiling one, as you take *hasra*. But in the same ṛk she goes towards men like a brotherless woman, mounting the throne, platform, or stage for the sake of wealth: *abhrāteva puṁsa eti prateṁ, gartārug iva sanaye dhanānām*, where the meaning of *gartāruk* is not clear. Obviously the reference is to one who has no brother to make a match for her, hence must display herself upon some high place to collect a dowry. . . .[35]

Nirukta (III.5) can explain the Ṛk only by turning to South India. Durga's account of the usage in South India is conflicting:

> Durga does not seem to have a very clear idea of the peculiar custom to which he refers. At one place, he says: 'If a sonless woman goes there, she obtains wealth. The gamblers give her wealth. This is the custom of the southern people.' At another place, he says: 'The woman who has lost her son and husband mounts it, i.e. takes her seat on it in the midst of the gamblers.. Then she obtains wealth from the relatives of her husband.' Whether the wealth was given by the gamblers or by the relatives of the deceased husband is not made clear; the precise nature of the custom remains therefore doubtful. . . .[36]

It only means that even in the matrilineal South, the matriarchal custom of the early Ṛg-vedic India had vanished long ago. The solution of the riddle depends on the correct interpretation of the two terms – 'gartāruk' and 'abhrātā'. Let us first take up the former term.

One of the meanings of 'garta' is the assembly hall of the tribe. Another meaning, according to Durga, is 'the seat or place where the dice is thrown'.[37] If we collate these two meanings with the foregoing elaboration, it becomes clear that Uṣā is compared to a devini tribal mother, who apportions the tribal wealth or land by lot-taking. Atharva-vedic hymn VI.118 clinches the issue. In it two Apsarases, the presiding deities of dice, are addressed as 'Rāṣṭra-bhṛt', communal rāṣṭra-land bearing.[38]

As for the term 'abhrātā', another tribal mother, Sara-mā, literally meaning river mother, tells the Paṇis in Ṛk X.108 that she knows no brotherhood or sisterhood. To be a tribal mother and not be a kinsman of anybody in her tribe is a contradiction in terms. In order to understand this contradictory reality, we will have to turn again to the function of brahma-vādinī.

It has already been noted that a woman who was to become a clan-mother (kula-pā), or a phratry-mother (janapada-kalyāṇī) or a tribal mother (gaṇikā) had to be initiated as a brahma-vādinī. Now what is

5

Earth Mother

Significantly enough, there seems to have been an intimate connection between iriṇa, the so-called natural cleft in the earth at the south-west of the Aryan sacrificial ground, and Nirṛti, the goddess of evil. Who was she?

Ṛg-vedic hymns VII.104.9, X.10, 11, X.18.10, X.59.1-4, X.95.14 and Atharva-vedic hymns VI.84, XIV.2.19 invoke Nirṛti as a deity of either evil or death. We come across her fullest description in Taittiriya Saṁhitā IV.2.5[1] as follows:

g. Homage to thee, O Nirṛti of every form (viśva-rūpe),
Loosen ye this bond made of iron;
Do thou in accord with Yama and Yami
Mount this highest vault.

h. The bond that Nirṛti, the goddess (devī Nirṛtir),
Bound on thy neck, not to be loosened,
This I loosen further as from the middle of life;
Then living, let loose, do thou eat the food.

i. Thee in whose cruel (krūra)* mouth here I make offering,
For the loosening of the bonds,
As 'earth' (bhūmir) men know thee,
As 'Nirṛti' I know thee on every side.

k. Seek** the man who poureth not offering nor sacrifice,
The road of the thief and robber thou followest:
Seek** another than us, that is thy road:
Homage be to thee, O Nirṛti, O goddess.

l. Praising Nirṛti, the goddess,
Like father his son, I weary her with my words;
She who knoweth all that is born,
Discerneth, the lady, every head.

m. Abode and collector of riches,
Every form she discerneth with might,
Like the god Savitṛ of true laws,
Like Indra, she standeth at the meeting of ways![2]

*Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā uses the term 'ghore' (XII.64).
**The verb iccha should be taken to mean 'to be possessed by a spirit'.

The post-Vedic Brahminical literature takes it for granted that Nirṛti stands for everything evil and deathlike. Even the distinguished Marxist scholar, Kosambi, calls her 'a death goddess'.[3]

Nirṛti was evidently a pre-Aryan goddess. Hence, such a non-Brahminical sect as the Jaina is seen taking a totally opposite view of Nirṛti. Kalpa-sūtra records that Mahāvīra passed away on the most auspicious of the new moon nights 'called Devānandā, surnamed Nirṛti'.[4] Commentator Samayasundara Gaṇi explains, 'That new moon day or night called Devānandā is also spoken of as Nirṛti.'

It seems for certain that Nirṛti retained her exalted position in the early Vedic period. Nighaṇṭu, the Vedic glossary older than the extant recension of Ṛg-veda,[5] gives Nirṛti as a synonym of earth along with Aditi and Ilā (I.1.14, 15, 16). Nirukta (II.7.8) juxtaposes both the views, pro-Nirṛti as well as anti-Nirṛti. The etymologists rendered Nirṛti as earth, while the ascetics interpreted Nirṛti as calamity.[6]

The word Nirṛti is formed by affixing the preposition 'nir' to 'ṛta'. According to the theory of grammarian Gārgya, quoted by Nirukta I.3, prepositions '. . .have various meanings. . .hence, whatever their meaning may be, they express that meaning (which brings about) modification in the sense of the noun and the verb. . . .'[7] It is according to this theory that Nir + ṛti means un-truth or evil. But, this theory fails to explain the original, non-Aryan and non-Brahminical meaning of Nirṛti. Only the theory of another grammarian, Śākaṭāyana, provides a satisfactory explanation: 'Unconnected prepositions. . .have no meaning but only express a subordinate sense of nouns and verbs. . . .'[8] Hence, according to this theory the preposition 'nir' does not reverse the meaning of ṛti, but buttresses it.

Ṛti or ṛta means, according to Nighaṇṭu (I.12.68), water. This etymology denotes that Nirṛti was originally an apsaras, a water or river goddess. Ṛta also means 'cosmic law', which makes Nirṛti the universal mother, the Prakṛti of the non-Brahminic Sāṅkhya philosophy.*

The above-quoted invocation of Nirṛti by Taittiriya Saṁhitā seems to have combined both the outlooks. By saying that she is called earth by the people, the hymn expresses the love she evoked, while by stating that oblations have to be offered in her cruel mouth in order to free the sacrificer from her fatal sacrificial bonds it expresses the fear she evoked. Being a ritual hymn, it has faithfully preserved an

*For exhaustive exposition of the latter meaning of ṛta, see *Lokāyata* by Chattopadhyaya, pp. 662 ff.

ancient reality. Then how is it that the same deity should arouse such mutually antagonistic emotions in her devotees? The absolute exclusiveness of such emotions is the work of civilisation, while in tribalism these antagonistic emotions exist not only in an inseparable unity, but are evoked by the same phenomenon.[9]

This is applicable to Nirṛti only is so far as she coexisted with Aditi, the Aryan mother of gods, as denoted by Nighaṇṭu. This coexistence of non-Aryan and Aryan divinities is but the reflection of the initial coexistence of these two peoples whose deities they were. Kosambi explains this coexistence as 'recombination'.[10]

The above-quoted hymn of Taittiriya Saṃhitā imprecates Nirṛti as one who follows 'the road of the thief and robber', and thus denotes that the coexistence was antogonistic. The tribal people may combine in confederations or clash in wars, but they are found to retain and rely on their own 'national' deities.[11]

Hence, though the pastoral Aryans settled in the land of Nirṛti, adopted her along with many rituals of her people, their distrust of Nirṛti and her people remained and asserted itself by making her subservient to their deity, Aditi. The Rāja-sūya, evidently a pre-Aryan ritual adopted by the Aryans, commences with oblations to Nirṛti,[12] but her human representative in the sacrifice is the discarded wife of the king, called Parivṛkti, while the deity of the chief queen, called Mahiṣi, is Aditi.[13]

In order to learn more about the Aryan on non-Aryan people, we will have to learn more about their goddess Nirṛti. For, the Kuṇḍapūva Jātaka says, 'As is the man, so is his deity.'*[14]

The invocation of Nirṛti by the Taittiriya (IV.2.5) and Vājasaneyi (XII.62-66) Saṃhitās is followed by the ritual of ploughing and oblation to Sītā, the deity of communal agriculture. Ritualists enjoin that a plough made of Udumbara wood should upturn four furrows.[15] The ploughing ritual is followed by the Rg-vedic hymn x.97 dedicated to plants.[16] The ritualists further prescribe that the first fifteen mantras of the hymn should be recited while sowing all plants in the four furrows.[17] The first Rk of this hymn is rendered by Keith as follows:

> The plants born
> Three generations (tri-yugam) before the gods,
> Of the brown ones I celebrate
> The seven and a hundred abodes.[18]

*Yathanno puriso hoti, tathannā tass devatā. A Sanskrit proverb says the same thing, though in a reverse manner: The offering to a deity is of the same nature as that of the deity (Yādṛśo yakṣo balir apy asya tadṛśaḥ).

Mm. Siddheshwarshastri Chitrav, in his Marathi translation of Rg-veda, while translating the Rk, substitutes 'tri-yutam' in place of 'tri-yugam', and renders it as Nirṛti.[19] With this emendation, the Rk will appear in translation as follows:

> I invoke the brown-coloured primeval plant (mothers), which are born of Nirṛti and the gods, and have one hundred and seven (clan) houses.

How is it that an anthropomorphic goddess is visualised as putting forth the plant world? Primitive man, though he had long ago separated himself *physically* from the non-human world, was *mentally* still wedded to that world in general. Hence, he thought the whole world, animate as well as inanimate, to be as human as himself. Indian myths are full of accounts of human beings giving birth not only to animals and plants, but also to inanimate objects. Kadrū was the mother of serpents, while Suparṇī or Vinatā was the mother of birds or eagles.[20] The sages laid a curse on the Yādavas, that Kṛṣṇa's son Samba would give birth to an iron pestle which would be the cause of their total destruction (XVI.1-19). Innumerable examples can be cited.

It was this mental make-up that led the tribal man to believe that the whole world, animate as well as inanimate, was produced by an anthropomorphic world mother. Chattopadhyaya draws our attention to a remarkable passage in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa:

> The Markandeya Purana has a well-known section called Devi Mahatmya that is the glory of the goddess. In this the goddess herself makes a rather startling declaration:
> 'Next, O ye gods, I shall support (i.e. nourish) the whole world with the life-sustaining vegetables, which shall *grow out of my body* (atma-deha samudbhavaih) during a period of heavy rain: I shall gain fame on the earth then as Sakambhari.'[21]

He goes on to explain that it is this concept of the mother goddess that led the people of Indus civilisation to fashion the seal bearing a remarkable representation of mother goddess:

> Interestingly, a concrete evidence of this belief has been unearthed by the archaeologist at Harappa (Fig. 2). Marshall described it as
> '...a very remarkable oblong seal from the Harappa (Plate XXii.12), on which a nude female figure is depicted upside down with legs apart and with a plant issuing from her womb.'[22]

V.S. Agrawala in his *India as Known to Pāṇini* has reproduced a photographic impression of an ancient terracota relief of earth mother. Her arms are intertwined by serpents and plants are growing on

Mm. Siddheshwarshastri Chitrav, in his Marathi translation of Rg-veda, while translating the Rk, substitutes 'tri-yutam' in place of 'tri-yugam', and renders it as Nirṛti.[19] With this emendation, the Rk will appear in translation as follows:

I invoke the brown-coloured primeval plant (mothers), which are born of Nirṛti and the gods, and have one hundred and seven (clan) houses.

How is it that an anthropomorphic goddess is visualised as putting forth the plant world? Primitive man, though he had long ago separated himself *physically* from the non-human world, was *mentally* still wedded to that world in general. Hence, he thought the whole world, animate as well as inanimate, to be as human as himself. Indian myths are full of accounts of human beings giving birth not only to animals and plants, but also to inanimate objects. Kadrū was the mother of serpents, while Suparṇi or Vinatā was the mother of birds of eagles.[20] The sages laid a curse on the Yādavas, that Kṛṣṇa's son Sāmba would give birth to an iron pestle which would be the cause of their total destruction (XVI.1-19). Innumerable examples can be cited.

It was this mental make-up that led the tribal man to believe that the whole world, animate as well as inanimate, was produced by an anthropomorphic world mother. Chattopadhyaya draws our attention to a remarkable passage in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa:

The Markandeya Purana has a well-known section called Devi Mahatmya, that is the glory of the goddess. In this the goddess herself makes a rather startling declaration:

Next, O ye gods, I shall support (i.e. nourish) the whole world with the life-sustaining vegetables, which shall *grow out of my body* (atma-deha-samudbhavaih) during a period of heavy rain: I shall gain fame on the earth then as Sakambhari.'[21]

He goes on to explain that it is this concept of the mother goddess that led the people of Indus civilisation to fashion the seal bearing a remarkable representation of mother goddess:

Interestingly, a concrete evidence of this belief has been unearthed by the archaeologist at Harappa (Fig. 2). Marshall described it as

'...a very remarkable oblong seal from the Harappa (Plate XXii.12), on which a nude female figure is depicted upside down with legs apart and with a plant issuing from her womb.'[22]

V.S. Agrawala in his *India as Known to Pāṇini* has reproduced a photographic impression of an ancient terracota relief of earth mother. Her arms are intertwined by serpents and plants are growing on her

head. She is the Sarpa-rājñī of Taittirīya Saṁhitā,[23] Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,[24] and Satapatha Brāhmaṇa.[25]

Hence, it can be reasonably asserted that the figure of the mother goddess on the Harappa seal can represent nobody other than Nirṛti, the pre-Aryan universal mother, who generated the plant world which had one hundred and seven houses. Atharva-vedic hymn 5.7.8 attests to her being naked.

Now, what are these 'houses' of plants? Śāktas, the worshippers of Śakti or mother-goddess, are enjoined by their scriptures to worship kula-trees and kula-yoginis:

Another aspect of Saktism that demands notice in this connection is the worship of the *kula* trees. The very first duty enjoined upon a Sakta on rising from bed very early in the morning is the salutation of the kula trees with the formula, *Om kulavriksebhyo namah*. According to *Kulacudamani*, 'the worshipper should salute the kula tree whenever he sees it'. The author of *Saktananda Tarangini* reproduces two different lists of the *kula* trees.... It is said of *kula* trees, 'The *kula yoginis* always dwell in all the kula trees. No one should sleep under the *kula* trees nor injure them'.[26]

Kula tree means the deity of the clan. In the drama Uttara-Rāma carita (Act VII) Pṛthvī (Earth goddess) says to her daughter Sītā pointing at the river goddess Gaṅgā with the words: 'This one (is) Bhāgirathi, the clan deity of your father-in-law.' The Buddhist Jātaka stories have left us the record that all people in those days, from king to common people, had trees as their clan deities and such a tree was called 'maṅgala-rukkha', meaning auspicious tree. In Kusa-nāli Jātaka, king Brahma-datta of Vārāṇasi had his own maṅgala tree.[27] In the Kusa-nāli and Palāsa Jātakas rural and urban people in the kingdom of Vārāṇasi offered oblations (bali) to their maṅgala trees.[28] The gāthās of these Jātakas are far more ancient, at least pre-Buddha. The gāthā in the Kuṇḍaka-pūva Jātaka has the word bhāga for share instead of bali. A share is given to the member or deity of a tribe or phratry or clan, and not to an alien. Hence, these trees could only have been clan deities, and Kula Yoginis or clan mothers.

Thus, one hundred and seven houses were but one hundred and seven clans headed by clan mothers. The ritual directive of Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā prescribes that the first fifteen Rks of the plant hymn, i.e. XII.75 to 90, should be recited in five Tṛks (one Tṛk combines three Rks) while pouring the plants in the four furrows.[29] Here we have actual modification of the five-phratried system into the four-phratried caupaṭa system.

That the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā should preserve a non-Aryan tradition is not surprising. An ancient tradition preserved by the legal literature says that the Śudras are Vājasaneyins:

...In certain digests we find a smṛti quotation to the effect that śūdras are Vājasaneyins. This is explained as meaning that the śūdras should follow the procedure prescribed in the gṛhyasūtra of the Vājasaneya Śākhā and a brāhmaṇa should repeat the mantra for him....[30]

The Rks X.97.17 and 18 of the plant hymn specifically mention that Soma was the king of the plants, and thus the divine consort of Nirṛti. This is corroborated by Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, when it defines etymologically that amāvāsyā, or new moon night, means the sacred marriage of the moon with the earth:

Now this soma, the food of the gods, is no other than moon. When he (the moon, masc.) is not seen that night either in the east or in the west, then he visits the world; and hence he enters into waters (f.) and plants (f.)...And since during that night he here dwells together (amā vas), therefore that (night of new moon) is called amāvāsyā (the dwelling together, or at home).[31]

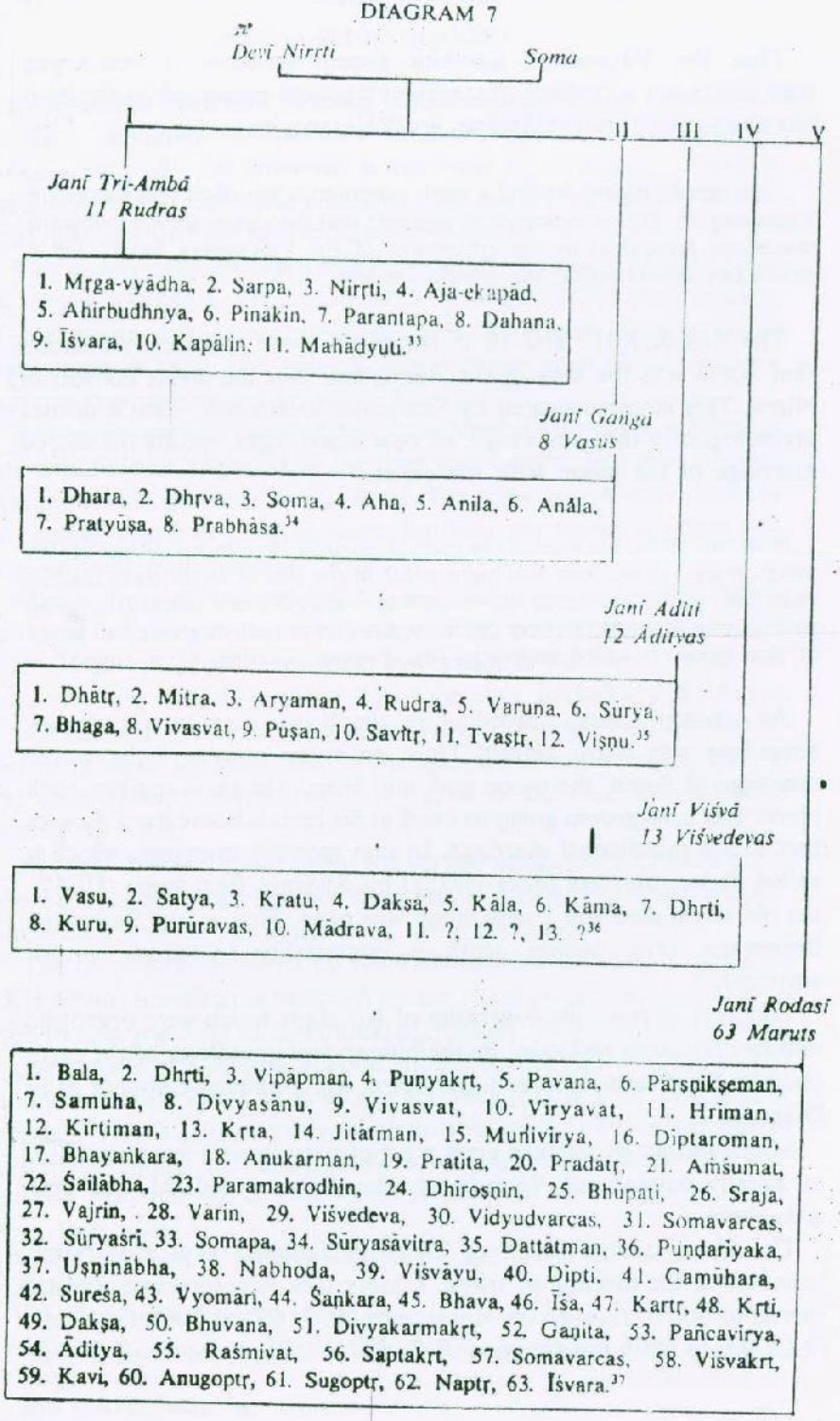
As already stated, according to the Kalpa-sutra of the Jainas, amāvāsyā was Nirṛti herself. Thus, on every amāvāsyā the sacred marriage of Soma, the moon god, and Nirṛti, the earth mother, took place. The bridegroom going to dwell at his bride's house itself denotes that it is a matrilocal marriage. In that monthly marriage, which is called divine marriage (deva-vivāha) by Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (IV.27), the old moon died and a new moon was born. That is why Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says, 'within death is immortality (Antaram mṛtyor amṛtam)'.[32]

This non-Aryan tribe consisting of 107 clans which were organised into five phratries and ruled by the human representatives of the earth goddess Nirṛti and the moon god Soma will graphically appear as in Diagram 7.

Mahābhārata by mistake gives a list of sixty-three Viśvedevas. But, as already pointed out, Viśvedevas were thirteen, while Maruts were sixty-three.

The above-quoted hymn of Taittirīya Saṁhitā says that Nirṛti 'standeth at the meeting of ways'. Cross-roads, it seems, was a place sacred to Nirṛti. Law-givers Āpastamba (B.C. 600 to 300), Gautama (B.C. 600 to 400), Baudhāyana (B.C. 500 to 200), Vasiṣṭha (B.C. 300

DIAGRAM 7


Devī Nirṛti
Soma
I
II
III
IV
V
Jani Tri-Ambā
11 Rudras
1. Mṛga-vyādha, 2. Sarpa, 3. Nirṛti, 4. Aja-ekapād, 5. Ahirbudhnya, 6. Pinākin, 7. Parantapa, 8. Dahana, 9. Īśvara, 10. Kapālin, 11. Mahādyuti.[33]
Jani Gangā
8 Vasus
1. Dhara, 2. Dhṛva, 3. Soma, 4. Aha, 5. Anila, 6. Anāla, 7. Pratyūṣa, 8. Prabhāsa.[34]
Jani Aditi
12 Ādityas
1. Dhātṛ, 2. Mitra, 3. Aryaman, 4. Rudra, 5. Varuṇa, 6. Sūrya, 7. Bhaga, 8. Vivasvat, 9. Pūṣan, 10. Savitṛ, 11. Tvaṣṭṛ, 12. Viṣṇu.[35]
Jani Viśvā
13 Viśvedevas
1. Vasu, 2. Satya, 3. Kratu, 4. Dakṣa, 5. Kāla, 6. Kāma, 7. Dhṛti, 8. Kuru, 9. Purūravas, 10. Mādrava, 11. ?, 12. ?, 13. ?[36]
Jani Rodasī
63 Maruts
1. Bala, 2. Dhṛti, 3. Vipāpman, 4. Puṇyakṛt, 5. Pavana, 6. Parṣṇikṣeman, 7. Samūha, 8. Divyasānu, 9. Vivasvat, 10. Vīryavat, 11. Hriman, 12. Kīrtiman, 13. Kṛta, 14. Jitātman, 15. Munivirya, 16. Diptaroman, 17. Bhayaṅkara, 18. Anukarman, 19. Pratita, 20. Pradātṛ, 21. Aṁśumat, 22. Śailābha, 23. Paramakrodhin, 24. Dhīroṣṇin, 25. Bhūpati, 26. Sraja, 27. Vajrin, 28. Varin, 29. Viśvedeva, 30. Vidyudvarcas, 31. Somavarcas, 32. Sūryaśrī, 33. Somapa, 34. Sūryasāvitra, 35. Dattātman, 36. Puṇḍariyaka, 37. Uṣṇinābha, 38. Nabhoda, 39. Viśvāyu, 40. Dipti, 41. Camūhara, 42. Sureśa, 43. Vyomārī, 44. Śaṅkara, 45. Bhava, 46. Īśa, 47. Kartṛ, 48. Kṛti, 49. Dakṣa, 50. Bhuvana, 51. Divyakarmakṛt, 52. Gaṇita, 53. Pañcavirya, 54. Āditya, 55. Raśmivat, 56. Saptakṛt, 57. Somavarcas, 58. Viśvakṛt, 59. Kavi, 60. Anugoptṛ, 61. Sugoptṛ, 62. Naptṛ, 63. Īśvara.[37]

to 200), enjoin that oblations to Nirṛti should be offerred on the cross roads.[38]

Cross-roads was the place where oblations to mother goddesses in general were offered since time immemorial. Cārudatta, the hero of the drama Mṛcchakaṭika (Act I), was but following a time-honoured usage when he requested his friend Maitreya to go to the cross-roads and offer on his behalf the oblations of that day to the mother goddesses.[39]

Bāṇa records an ancient custom when he narrates in his Kādambari that Queen Vilāsavatī, in order to overcome her childlessness, used to go to a cross-road on the fourteenth night of the dark half of every month, and sitting in a charmed circle traced by a great sorcerer used to take a ritual bath. Though dying out, the custom still persists in Indian countryside. In order that the fertilising waters should touch every part of the body, childless women strip themselves completely naked and take bath on cross-roads on new moon nights.

The Greek parallel to Nirṛti is Hekate or Artemis. Both are entitled trioditis, the place where three ways meet.[40]

Cross-roads was so sacred a place in non-Brahminical tradition that no less a person than Buddha bade Ānanda to erect a dāgaba at the cross-roads on the remains of his body:

'. . .At the four cross-roads a dāgaba should be erected to the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall there place garlands or perfumes or paint, or make salutations there, or become in its presence calm in heart – that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy.'

27. 'These men, Ananda, worthy of a dāgaba, are four in number. Which are four?

'A Tathāgata, or Arhata-Buddha, is worthy of a dāgaba. A paccēka-Buddha is worthy of a dāgaba. A true hearer of the Tathagata is worthy of a dāgaba. A king of kings (rājā cakka-vattī) is worthy of a dāgaba.'[41]

Buddha reiterates but a hoary tradition harking back to pre-Aryan times since when dāgabas used to be erected at the cross-roads on the remains of priests and priest-kings (cakka-vattī).

It has already been noted that Nirṛti's sacred place, i.e. cross-roads, was an impregnating place. The etymology of Nirṛti itself reveals that she was a goddess of fertility, '. . .*nirṛtiḥ* (earth) is (so called) from giving enjoyment (Nirṛtir nirramaṇāt)'.[42] What is meant by 'giving enjoyment'?

The verb used is 'ram'. It also meant 'sexual enjoyment'. Rāmāyaṇa (1.77.13) narrates that Sītā and her sisters enjoyed sexual pleasure (*remire*) with their respective husbands immediately after marriage. This becomes clear beyond doubt by the etymology of Urvaśī, another

initiation? Initiation was a ritual by which a person was admitted to tribal membership. Baudhayana, one of the earliest law-givers, declares that a person, though he may belong to the higher three castes, namely Brahmin, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya, loses his Aryan-hood if not initiated, and becomes a Śūdra.[39] Initiation was an obligatory rite in all tribal societies the world over. Frazer sums up:

> ...Among many savage tribes, especially such as are known to practise totemism, it is customary for lads at puberty to undergo certain initiatory rites, of which one of the commonest is a pretense of killing the lad and bringing him to life again....[40]

The initiation rite among the Arabs was circumcision and women were the initiators of the rite:

> Female circumcision was an immemorial practice among the Arabs. Indeed, according to the Arab tradition, it preceded male circumcision; it was said to have been first practised by Sarah on Hagar; afterwards both Sarah and Abraham by order of Allah, circumcised themselves. Its prevalence in Arabia was known to Strabo.... According to Ibn-al-Athir, Muhammad pronounced circumcision to be 'an ordinance for men and honourable for women'.[41]

Initiation was originally a puberty rite: '...From the reference to the beard and from the words "this man (ayaṁ puruṣaḥ)" occurring in the Atharvaveda VIII.1.1[42] and elsewhere it appears probable that upanayana was performed rather later in those ancient days than in the days of the sūtras.'[42]

Puberty was more evident, more sacred, and more productive in women than in men. Hence, it is but natural that initiation should have started with women, and with the rise of patriarchy adopted by men to imbue themselves with the female sacredness and authority.

The Aryan initiatory rite upanayana meant taking a young person to a teacher for Vedic studentship.[43] The termination of this studentship (brahma-carya) was performed by a ritual called 'samāvartana'. Āśvalāyana Gṛhya-sūtra (III.8.11) prescribes that the samāvartana should be performed by applying ointment to the face by a Brahmin, to both the arms by a Kṣatriya, to the belly by a Vaiśya, and to the sexual organ by a woman. This peculiar samāvartana rite for women was not just symbolical. It meant that the brahma-cārinī was on the point of attaining puberty:

> ...Hārita prescribes that in the case of women samāvartana took place before the appearance of menses. Therefore brahmavādinī women had upanayana performed in the 8th year from conception, that they studied Vedic lore and finished student-hood at the age of puberty....[44]

Kuntī, the mother of Karṇa and the Pāṇḍavas, is the classic illustration of this point. She was a daughter of Śūra, a clan-chief of the Vṛṣṇi phratry of the Yādava tribe, and was adopted by Kuntī bhoja, a paternal aunt's son of Śūra and priest-king belonging to the Kuntī clan of the Bhoja phratry of another tribe (I.67.130). Kuntī-bhoja handed over Kuntī to Dur-vāsas, a naked Brahmin teacher for initiation into the Atharva-śiras magical lore (I.110.4-6; III.304.13; III.305.20), in whose service she remained for a year (III.305.12). After samāvartana she attained puberty (III.306.3). In order to test the efficacy of the magical lore imparted to her by the Brahmin teacher, she recited one of the mantras which was an invocation of the sun god (III.306.7). The god came down in glorious human form and expressed his desire to copulate with her. Afraid of the ire of her kinsmen, she entreated the god to return to his celestial abode. The god pacified her misgivings by the following verses (III.307.12-16):

> You have neither father, nor mother, nor elders who can govern you, O auspiciously smiling one! May you prosper, O of the slender waist, and lend your ear to what I have to say!
>
> The word kanyā (virgin), O beautiful one, is derived from the root kam, and means one who can desire anybody (with whom she is infatuated); hence, O fair one of voluptuous hips, (know that) a virgin is (by nature) free.
>
> The original and natural order of this world, O fair one, is the unrestrainedness of women and men in their relation with each other, while rites like marriage are but artificial in nature.
>
> You shall again gain your virginhood after uniting with me. And the son you shall bear is fated to become mighty and victorious.

The tribal mother was a lifelong virgin, and uninhibited by kinship bonds in her sexual relations with her tribal members. Hence, the term 'a-bhrātā' should mean 'uninhibited by kinship in sexual relations'. The meaning of the Ṛk now will be as follows:

> Uṣas, who, as a tribal mother, is uninhibited by kinship in sexual relations, appears before the tribal sabhā for distribution of the communal land with the help of the dice board and the dice, Usas, well attired and smiling, as would a wife before her husband, uncovers her body before the Sabhā.

That is why as a tribal mother Kuntī commanded her five sons to enjoy apportioning their alms in the person of Draupadī equitably (I.190.2). Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, assured king Drupada of the Pañcālas (I.194.30-31):

I am not speaking untruth, nor my mind likes to indulge in irreligiousness. I am convinced that my mother is uttering what is but the (sacred) truth.

This is the law of eternal sanctity, O King, and you should abide by it without having any misgivings. May you not entertain any doubt whatsoever, O ruler of earth.

The Khasi tribals of Assam preserved their matriarchal society until the first quarter of the present century. The tribe (kur) was descended from a primal ancestress called Ka Iawbei,[45] which was succinctly expressed by their saying 'from the woman sprang the clan'.[46] The phratry was called 'kpoh'. Land belonged to the clan (iing) and the clan was headed by the 'young' grandmother (Ka Iawbei Khynraw).[47] The produce of the land was equally divided among the clan members by this clan mother:

> ...The male members of the family may cultivate such lands, but they must carry all the produce to the house of their mother, who will divide it amongst the members of the family...[48]

But, the mother did not divide the communal product equally in the literal and quantitative sense of the term. The physical capacity of the individual clan members was also taken into account in this division. Though Kuntī ordered her sons to divide the alms equally, when it came to actual apportionment, she is found to have made it in an 'unequal' manner. When the Pāṇḍavas handed over to Kuntī every day the alms that they had secured during their daily rounds in the town of Eka-cakrā, she divided the food secured as alms into two equal portions, one of which was partaken by Kuntī and her four sons, namely, Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva, while the other half was eaten solely by Bhīma (1.156.5-6).

> Then (after returning from their round of alms) at night they handed over the alms to Kuntī. The food then, after being apportioned among them by her, each ate his share individually.
>
> Half of it was partaken by the (four) enemy-harassing heroes along with their mother, while the (remaining) half of the whole alms was eaten by the mighty Bhīma.

References

1. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 214.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 464-465.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

5. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 150.
6. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, etc., H.O.S., Vol. XVIII, p. 272.
7. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, pp. 202-204.
8. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka*, Mahāvagga pāli, VIII.12.18.
9. *Ibid.*, *Cullavagga pāli*, IV.5.2.
10. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XX, pp. 56-57.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 3-4.
15. Morgan, L.H., *Ancient Society*, p. 70.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229, 292-293.
17. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, pp. 6-7.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, pp. 4-5.
19. Lukinitsky, P., *Nisso*, pp. 201, 202.
20. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, p. 156.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 207-210.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, Vol. XLI, pp. 317, 320-321.
26. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189.
27. *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, pp. 3-8.
28. Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 29-30.
29. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Marathi trans.), pp. 150-155; *Taittirīya Saṁhita*, I.8.16; Keith, A.B., *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, pp. 342-343.
30. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, s.v.
31. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 177.
32. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Saṁyutta-nikāya pāli*, 42.7.7.
33. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I., p. 305.
34. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 40.
35. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 62.
36. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 252.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, pp. 367-368.
39. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, p. 150.
40. Frazer, J.G., *Balder the Beautiful*, p. 225.
41. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. III, p. 323.
42. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. i., p. 270.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 333-334.
45. Gurdon, P.R.T., *The Khasis*, pp. XIX-XX, 63, 111.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

mother goddess, given by Nirukta (V.13): 'Urvaśī is (the name of) of a naiad, (so called because) she pervades wide regions (uru + vaś "to pervade"), or, she pervades by means of thighs....' Durga explains the latter rendering as 'in sexual enjoyment'.[43]

When Nirṛti's people were enslaved by the Aryans, her daughters came to be called 'rāmās' by their masters, the term again being derived from the root 'ram':

...Having kindled the sacred fire, one should not approach a lovely dark maiden (rāmā). It is only for enjoyment (ramaṇāya) and not for any sacred purpose that a lovely dark maiden is approached....[44]

It is by condemning woman to slavery that the norms of sexual morality were created. That is why the patriarch Karṇa derided Draupadī as bandhakī, or the meanest kind of slave woman or prostitute (II.68.35):

Gods have ordained, O scion of the Kurus, one husband for womankind. But this (Draupadī), being possessed by several (husbands), is fit only to be called a bandhakī.

But, according to Mahābhārata, a totally different sexual code held sway when woman was free. The tale of Uddālaka and Śvetaketu has already been quoted.[45] Paṇḍu persuaded Kunti to resort to levirate by preaching the same ancient morality:

But I shall now tell thee about the practice of old indicated by illustrious *risis* fully acquainted with every rule of morality.... Women formerly were not immured within houses and dependent on husbands and other relatives. They used to go about freely, enjoying as best liked by them.... They did not then adhere to their husbands faithfully, and yet, O handsome one, they were not regarded sinful, for that was the sanctioned usage of the times. That very usage is followed to this day by birds and beasts without any exhibition of jealousy. That practice, sanctioned by precedent, is applauded by great risis. And O thou of tapering thighs, the practice is yet regarded with respect among the Northern Kurus. Indeed, this usage so lenient to women hath the sanction of antiquity. The present practice, however, hath been established but lately.[46]

This sexual promiscuity was not senseless indulgence in passion, but was considered to have magical significance. Primitive agricultural peoples all over the world firmly believed that permanent sexual freedom to their women was essential for assuring the fertility of the soil, and in order to gain abundant harvests both sexes of a tribe indulged in promiscuous intercourse on appointed days. Briffault gives examples of peoples from every continent, out of which the examples of Indian tribals are reproduced here:

...In Chota Nagpur, among the Hos, the harvest is the signal for general license, and such license is looked upon as a matter of absolute necessity. In Orissa, among the Bhuiyas, during the spring festival called Magh Porai, 'all respect of blood relations and husbands is set at naught'. The Parganait, a caste of husbandmen in the Rajmahal Hills, have a great yearly agricultural festival, called Sohrai, at which the unmarried of both sexes indulge in promiscuous intercourse. In Jeypore promiscuity and changes of partners last for a month at the new year festival of the Runjas. The Kotas of Nilgiri Hills have a similar festival of continuous licentiousness. In Assam spring festivals are observed by all the tribes, and women are allowed complete freedom without 'any stain, blemish, or loss of reputation'. Similar festivals are observed in Khondistan, among the wild tribes of Manipur, and of Northern Burma'.[47]

In the great agricultural civilisations of ancient Egypt and Asia it was obligatory for every unmarried woman, high or low, to sit in 'prostitution' at the door of the temple of their mother goddesses.[48] The custom continued in Egypt even after it embraced Islam.[49]

But, as illustrated by the examples of sage Uddālaka's wife and Kunti, even after marriage the sexual freedom of women was far from being restricted even by their husbands. If we accept the ethical code of Karṇa, who himself was the virgin-born son of Kunti, then we will have to assume that in ancient times all women were but bandhakis, while all men acted as but cuckolds to their wives. The real purpose underlying the strange sexual freedom enjoyed by women by universal consent in ancient agricultural societies is disclosed by the equally strange usage prevalent among the Arabs of Morocco and North Africa, who were devout followers of Islam for more than a millennium when the French conquered them and wrote about them. When the French authorities tried to put a stop to the 'dissolute' life led by their women, 'they have met with fanatical opposition on the part of the agricultural population, *who allege that such a state of things is necessary in order to obtain abundance of crops*'.[50]

It is only in this context that the 'abominable' custom that till recently was prevalent in a part of Kerala can be understood:

...This (Wemmaṇi) was a separate principality with Kārttikapilli for its capital at the time of Nieuhoff.... The Dutch captain speaks of a law existing in this kingdom of so abominable character as scarcely to be believed of human beings. He says, 'It is commonly reported in these parts that the king of Batyma made a law, by which a man is empowered to kill any woman that should refuse him a kindness.' This law or custom is referred to by earlier writers also. Archbishop Meneses found it to exist when he visited 'Catiapilly' in the dominions of the Rāja of Betuniena. Hugh says, 'The men

assumed the right of dishonouring any woman, whatever her rank or circumstance; and the laws permitted them to put one to death on the spot who should resist their brutal demands.'[51]

To call the custom prostitution is a misnomer. *It is only by depriving woman of her sexual freedom and by imposing monogamy on her that enforced chastity of women in general and prostitution of a section of them in particular came to exist in a unity of opposites.*

Not a single prostitute was to be found in Tibet up to that time the Tibetans practised group-marriage; while at the same time lowlands and Kashmir swarmed with prostitutes as a result of their adopting individual marriage.[52] Hence, prostitution cannot exist in a society which practises sexual promiscuity.

The classic illustration of ritual promiscuous copulation is that of the mother of Vyāsa, the reputed author of Mahābhārata. She was the daughter of the king of the Dāśa tribe living on the banks of Yamunā, adjacent to the territory of the Kurus of Hastināpura, whose king Śantanu she later married. Satyavatī was known by her maiden name Matsya-gandhā, or Fish-odoured (I.63.69). But it is significant that in her unmarried and married states of life she was known by the name of Kālī (I.104.24). Though Kālī literally means 'dark', a princess and later a queen could not have been called by a derisive epithet. Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣnā or Draupadī, both meaning dark, were honourable epithets of the most dominating figures of Mahābhārata. *It is the colour of earth, and hence most esteemed by ancient agricultural societies.*

The Dāśa king is said to have received Kālī from the river Yamunā (I.63.67). It means that the Dāśa king was the sacred consort of the river goddess. Popular tradition still assumes that Gaṅgā is fair while Yamunā is dark. Hence, Kālī must have been a name of the river goddess *herself*, and being the daughter of the river goddess, Satyavatī came to be called Kālī. Kālī also is one of the names of the mother goddess Durgā (IV.6.17).

When she came of age, she was appointed by her father to ply a canoe on the river. Accosted by the enamoured sage Parāśara, she said:

> I am a daughter of the Dāśas. May you prosper! I have been appointed by my father, the great-souled king of the Dāśas, to ply this canoe for earning religious merit.

What religious merit (dharma) accrued from plying the canoe on the river? The verses I.63.72-73 will help to explain it:

> (Parāśara) said (to her), 'Unite with me, O auspicious one!' She said, 'See, O blessed one, the sages standing on the banks. How can the intercourse take place under their very eyes!'

There is no compulsion or fear. That she consented through fear of the sage's curse is a later interpretation (I.104.10). The word 'ni-yoga' used means 'appointed for copulation'. She was appointed by her father to ritually copulate with every desirous ford-maker and Parāśara was one of the many to share her liberal favours. Yamunā was one of the earliest to be trained to artificial irrigation. Hari-vaṁśa (46.30-52) narrates in an extremely poetical manner how Yamunā was tamed by Balarāma. After mating ritually with her (46.45, 49), he commanded her:

> Follow the channel dug up by my plough, O beautiful one; and satiate this whole (vraja) country, O auspicious one, by the bounty of your waters!

It was to ensure abundant harvest for the Dāśa tribe that Kālī Satyavatī mated promiscuously in her sacred canoe.

The matter is further clarified by the Kusa Jātaka.[53] Okkāka, king of the Mallas of Kusāvatī, was childless. The Mallas assembled before his palace and raised a shout, 'The country will perish!' The king, bowing before the time-honoured custom, sent his three queens, the youngest first, the middle one next, and lastly the eldest and the chief queen (mahesī), as 'dharma-naṭis' among his tribesmen for promiscuous intercourse.

This was not an accidental, or non-Aryan, phenomenon. Rāma and his brothers, Sītā, the Pāṇḍavas, Draupadī and a host of other celebrities of ancient times were offsprings of such dharma-naṭis.

For tribal Indians, the very meeting of their tribal assembly was an act of sexual copulation. Majjhima-nikāya[54] uses the term 'sannipāta' for sexual intercourse. Aṅguttara-nikāya,[55] while narrating that five hundred Licchavis had assembled in the Sārandada Caitya, uses the term 'sannipāta' to denote that act. The very mote-hall where the tribal assembly met was called 'sandhā-āgāra', the house of coition. The meeting of the temple authorities in South India is called yogam.[56]

Thus, dharma, which later came to mean religion, originally meant ritual promiscuous population. That is why, according to Rāmāyaṇa (I.36.24), earth goddess is the wife of many (bahu-bhāryā).

The two words dharma and nati, forming the compound dharma-naṭī, have much to tell us. Let us first take up the former word. Pūrva

mimāṁsā, the philosophy which grew out of and in defence of Vedic ritualism or magic, defines dharma as that which is characterised by Vedic injunction or command (codanā-lakṣaṇo'rtho dharmaḥ).[57] Dharma or magic is defined by Thomson as 'command'.[58] Command to whom by whom? It was a command on behalf of a technically backward and organisationally monolithic tribe to nature. This is best illustrated by the Maccha Jātaka.[59] Buddha, in a former life, born as the king of fishes in a lake on the outskirts of Srāvastī in Kosala country, in order to save his tribe (ñāti-saṅgha) from the raging famine and the hovering crows, commanded Pajjunna (god of rain) to open its floodgates:

Come thundering and flashing, O Pajjunna! Deprive the crows of their feast! Enshroud them in lamentations! Release us from this affliction!*

The command for the desired result was accompanied with the miming in song and dance of the actual natural process that was seen to precede that desired result. Naṭi is derived from the root 'naṭ', meaning 'to mime'. Kosambi explains:

The original meaning of *nāṭya* is precisely miming, not acting in the modern sense. . . . For example, in the Mṛcchakaṭikam, the villain Śakāra dances (*nartayati*) with joy in the 9th act, a simple enough demonstration. But the masseur-monk in act 3 takes the place of an image to escape his pursuers, after miming various sentiments: *bahuvidhaṁ nāṭyaṁ kṛtvā*. Śakāra mimes a sentiment, not an action (in the 9th act) when he manifests temptation: *iti moham nāṭayati*. In the same act, the hero Cārudatta mimes his shame (*lajjāṁ nāṭayati*) without verbal answer when the shocked judge asks him, 'Sir, is a courtezan then your friend?'; fear is mined by him on his way to execution. . . .[60]

Many of the Rgvedic hymns were ritual dramas, meant to be mimed and sung:

Most of the Rgvedic hymns are meant to be chanted by one or more priests. But there are a few exceptions where *the hymns can only be explained as what remains* of a ritual performance. For example, three (or four) characters, Indra, Indrāṇī and Vṛṣākapi (and perhaps his wife) take part in X.86 which is unquestionably sensual with its quite erotic passages. . . . The dialogue of Urvaśī and Purūravas is likely meant to be a part of a ritual act performed by two characters representing the principals and is thus a substitute for an earlier, actual sacrifice of the male. . . .[61]

*The rāga Megha-malhāra in classical Indian music is the climaxing outcome of this rain-making magic.

The rendering by Mm. Siddheshwarshastri Chitrav of the Rks X.86.16 and 17 is given below:

(Indrāṇī eager for intercourse says), 'O Indra, a person whose sexual organ hangs (loosely) between his thighs is deficient in virility. Only he can copulate whose sexual organ stays erect even when he lies down. Supreme is Indra over all.'

(Remaining apathetic to her proposal Indra says), 'O Indrāṇi, he whose sexual organ hangs (loosely) between his thighs can copulate better than the one having a taut sexual organ. Supreme is Indra over all.'[62]

In such ritual dramas the dominating character is that of a woman. In the horse sacrifice, the three mothers, Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā, mime coition with the slaughtered horse and later mime promiscuous copulation with the priests.[63] The triune Ambā and other heroins of these ritual dramas were tribal mothers and officiated as naṭīs or janapada-kalyānīs or gaṇikās, or in Vedic idiom: Brahmavādinīs.

They were originally in charge of the magic of the tribe. Māyā is the Vedic term for magic. Chattopadhyaya explains the etymology of māyā as follows:

. . .Another well-known synonym for *prakriti* was *maya* (in a sense opposite to the Vedanta) and it is suggested that the word was derived from the root *ma*, to measure. Obviously, it is the same root that gave Sanskrit the word 'mother'. . . .[64]

What did she measure? Obviously the rāṣṭra or the tribal land.

How is it that the woman in ancient times, in spite of her indulging in promiscuous intercourse, was not considered 'sinful'? Because, declares law-giver Baudhāyana, their impurities were purged by menstrual discharges:

4. 'Women (possess) an unrivalled means of purification; they never become entirely foul. For month by month their temporary uncleanliness removes their sins.'

5. 'Soma gave them cleanliness, the Gandharva their melodious voice, and fire purity of all (limbs); therefore women are free from stains.'[65]

That is why the saga Parāśara and the sun god assured Kālī and Kunti respectively that they would regain their virginhood after delivery.[66] It is on account of this unique quality of regaining virginhood after every monthly course that mother goddesses in India received the epithet 'kumārī', eternal virgin. One of the appellations of Durgā in Mahābhārata is Kumārī (IV.6.7).

Regaining of virginhood every month also meant rejuvenation of youth. Hence, the mother goddess is conceived as eternally young. Atharvavedic hymn VII.6.2 declares that Aditi is eternally young (ajarantī).

This purification and rejuvenation of the earth mother after she has 'delivered' her yearly harvest, is celebrated by the Malayalis in the form of Uchāral festival.[67]

Menstruation, to primitive mind, is the direct cause of procreation.[68] The Greek scientist-philosopher, Aristotle, and Indian Āyur-veda (medical science) believed in it.[69] Ancient Indians poetically called the appearance of menses as 'putting forth of blossoms'. The Asura princess Śarmiṣṭhā, after attaining puberty, entreated king Yayāti to fructify her blossom (rtum) so that she may generate fruit.[70]

Pali scriptures are more explicit:

> At that time the Magadha king Seniya Bhimbisāra suffered from fistula, his garments were stained with blood. When the queens saw that, they ridiculed (the king, and said): 'His Majesty is having his courses. His Majesty will bring forth.[71]

Rhys Davids' translation does not bring out the sense fully. Literal translation will be, 'His Majesty is in blossom; His Majesty has put forth flowers; soon His Majesty will generate fruit!'[72]

It is due to this conception that in matrilineal agricultural societies such as Kerala, the attaining to puberty by a girl, instead of being shameful, was celebrated as a great event.[73] Celebration of puberty and other fertility rites was supposed to generate similar processes in nature. It was believed that plants had a longing like pregnant women (dohaḍa) at the budding time, and the Aśoka could blossom forth by the kick of a young belle, while the Bakula by a spout of liquor from a damsel's mouth.[74]

The proverb occurring in Kuṇḍa-pūva Jātaka, which has been already quoted, literally means: 'As is the food of man, so is the food (offered) to his deity.' Hence, let us see what was the food of Nirṛti.

In the Rāja-sūya sacrifice, in the house of the human representative of Nirṛti, Parivṛkti, the discarded wife of the sacrificer king, the following oblation is offered to the goddess: 'To Nirṛti (he offers) an oblation in the house of the neglected wife, made up of black rice broken by the nails.'[75] In piling of the Gārhapatya fire, the Taittiriya Saṁhitā directs, 'for Nirṛti there are three (bricks) black, dried by a chaff fire, chaff is the portion of Nirṛti, black is the form of Nirṛti'.[76] The food of Nirṛti was black rice, in contradistinction to barley (yava),

the staple diet of the Aryans. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa declares that except barley all the other food plants belonged to the Asuras.[77] The Buddhist canon Dīgha-nikāya preserves the account that wild paddy (akaṭṭhapāko sāli) was the first food plant to be discovered by man.[78]

The agrestic slaves of Kerala were given as part payment of their labour, black rice, whose name Neerab, strangely enough, is akin to Nirṛti.[79] Tradition believes that these slave castes were the original inhabitants of southern India and they were a free and prosperous people before they were conquered and enslaved by the Chola kings. The Pulayas still have their own temples of Bhagavati, and in Sarkaray a Thanda Pulayan officiates as a priest:

> . . .At the great Siva feast of Tiruvalur in the Tanjore district, the chief of the Parayan rides an elephant with the statue of the diety, the Yak tail as a token of honour in his hands. Once a year, too, a Parayan becomes the ritual husband of the statue of the deity in Sriperumbudur. . . . It is probably true that, as H.A. Stuart reports in the Census of India, 1891, the Velluvan, priests of the Paraya caste, were employed in this function at the court of the Pallava kings, not only before the immigration of the Brahmins, but even some time later. . . .[80]

E.M.S. Namboodiripad observes:

> . . .It is remarkable how, in spite of the centuries of Brahmin domination, non-Brahminical deities continue to be worshipped in the plains and coastal area, not to speak of the same being done in highlands. Many of these have of course been taken over by Brahmins, the deities themselves being converted to Brahminism. There are, however, many more that are still under non Brahmin domination, being non-Brahminical in name, mode of worship, etc. . . .[81]

These non-Brahminical temples are predominantly of mother goddesses. The number of mother-goddesses is legion. Mahābhārata (IX.46) narrates that innumerable mother-goddesses accompanied Skanda, the commander-in-chief of the gods, when he led the gods in their battle against the Asuras. The main mother goddesses are variously said to be eight or seven. The eight mother-goddesses are as follows: Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Aindrī, Vārāhī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī, Cāmuṇḍā, and Carcikā. Amara-koṣa (70), enumerating the seven mothers, deletes Carcikā. Durgā is the most important deity of Bengal. The seven mothers have seven temples dedicated to them in Maharashtra. The eldest sister is Sapta-śṛṅgī (seven-horned), having her temple in Nasik district, and her fair, held on the full moon day of Caitra (March-April), is one of the biggest in Maharashtra. The youngest sister Eka-vīrā (one-heroed), has her temple next to the

cremation ground in Dhule. Both of these goddesses are served by Bhopes, a hereditary priesthood drawn from the non-Brahmin musician Gurava caste. Mahā-lakṣmī, the famous tribal mother goddess in Thana district, is served in heredity by a family of Warli tribals themselves.

The grotesque statues of these mothers and the gaudy temples housing them are but later innovations. Originally a shapeless stone representing the mother goddess was placed on a raised earthern platform in a sacred grove. Such a sacred grove is still known by the term 'vāḍī' in Maharashtra. Each village of the Khasis of Assam had its sacred grove.[82] It has already been shown that Amba-pālī, the representative of the mother goddess of the Vajji confederation, had her own sacred grove called Amba-vana (sacred grove of the mother).

C. Kunhan Raja thinks that this worship of mother goddesses in sacred groves is of pre-Vedic and Dravidian origin:

> The gods of the *Vedas* are not forest deities. They came in chariots drawn by horses and there is no mention of hunting associated with the *Vedic* gods. But when we come to the non-*Vedic* gods of Hinduism, we find that they are associated with the forest and with hunting. Nearly all the Saivaite gods of Hinduism are non-*Vedic*, and are recognised as Dravidian. There are especially two deities, Kālī or Durgā and Ayyappan (a Dravidian god that is supposed to be the offspring of Śiva through Viṣṇu as *māyā*, who distributed nectar to the gods after the churning of the ocean). The temple of these two deities is called a *Kavu* in certain parts of South India and the word means a forest or grove. This shows that these deities were worshipped in forests and groves. The place where the serpent images are installed and worshipped is also designated by the same term.[83]

It will be a misnomer to style the institution of grove-installed mother goddesses as exclusively Dravidian. Nevertheless, it was definitely of pre-Aryan origin and has existed throughout Indian history as a non-Brahminical institution *all over India. A mother-goddess was originally but a deified tribal mother.* Hence, it is incorrect to call the mother-goddess-worshipping societies as hunting ones. They were pre-eminently agricultural societies, in which women tilled the soil and men hunted.

That Nirṛti was worshipped as a shapeless stone becomes evident from the following passage of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa:

> Having thereupon put that stone (symbolising rocks and mountains) into the water-pitcher, they throw it in that (south-western) direction, for that is Nirṛti's region....[84]

A water-pitcher with a stone in it is also a symbolic representation

of the female womb with an embryo in it; for in the worship of Durgā, 'pūrṇa-ghaṭa' is the only object of worship.[85]

As already shown, Nirṛti was also a water or river goddess. The word apsaras (naiad) has got corrupted in Marathi into the term Āsarā. Certain stones or rocks in a river are known as āsaras, and they are still worshipped by newly delivered mothers who take the infant to that rock and 'mime' swinging of the child on it.

The Semitic peoples worshipped wooden stock and stone. The Biblical patriarch Jeremiah condemned them as idolaters who conceived the stone to be their mother and the stock to be their father.[86] One would think that Jeremiah was denouncing the seer of the Atharvavedic hymn XII.1.12 '...earth is mother. I am earth's son; Parjanya is father....'[87]

The stone and the stock do not imply that their worshippers did not know the arts of architecture and sculpture:

> ...Even when the arts had made considerable progress the Semites felt no need to fashion their sacred symbols into likenesses of the gods. Melcarth was worshipped at Tyre in the form of two pillars, and at the great temple of Paphos, down to Roman times, the idol was not an anthropomorphic image of Astarte, but a conical stone....[88]

The sacred black stone of Ka'aba originally represented Al-Uzza, the primal mother goddess of Arabia:

> The Great Goddess of Arabia was most generally known as Al-Uzza. We are told by Al-Kindy that Al-Uzza was the moon. Her chief shrine, and the most famous and sacred spot of Arabia, was the Ka'aba at Mecca. The Khuraish, the tribe that had the charge of the holy place, were in pre-Islamic times her priestly caste and bore the title of 'Abd al-Ussah', that is 'the servants of Al-Uzza', but her immediate service in the temple of Mecca was performed by aged priestesses. At the present day the guardians of the Ka'aba are known as the Beni-Ṣhaybah, that is 'the sons of the Old Woman'.... The great Goddess was worshipped in the Ka'aba in the form of a sacred stone, which, there can be no doubt, was none other than the famous black stone which is still the most sacred object in Islam. When he abolished the old 'idols' of the old religion, Mohammad, whose dominating ideal was to unite all Arabian tribes into a single political body bound by a common cult, felt it to be undesirable or impracticable to do away with the most sacrosanct object or symbol of the old religion. The Muslim pilgrims from all quarters of the globe proceed to Mecca to this day chiefly with the purpose of kissing the ancient image of the Great Goddess of Arabia. As in most other shrines in Semitic and also in Greek lands, the aniconic stone of the deity stood by a sacred spring, or well, the Zemzem, whose sacred waters are drunk by all good Muslims....[89]

It is a mistake to call Al-Uzza the moon, for moon was specifically known as Sinn:

> The most general name of the moon god, in ancient Babylonia, was Sinn, which is still the ordinary Syrian name for the moon; the Kurds at the present day speak of the moon as Sheikh Sinn. The name is equally prominent in Arabian inscriptions down to the furthest southern extremity of the Peninsula. . . .[90]

Al-Uzza, like Astarte and Nirṛti, was the earth mother of the Arabs.

Now, why was the south-western direction especially sacred to Nirṛti? If she was the deity of death as she is alleged to be, then her direction should have been south, the direction of Yama, the god of death, or of the deceased fathers.

South-western direction was also the most sacred direction to the ancient and mediaeval people of Kerala. Every village had its mote-hall or Sabhā, and it was situated in the south-western corner of the village temple:

> In the inscription dated Kollam year 384 (A.D. 1209) we read, 'In the presence of the Tiruvaṇṭapuram Association and its Sabhanjita (Chairman) assembled in the Southern (Hall) of Mitrānandapuram (under the solemn presidency) of (the Bhattāraka) &c.' Commenting on the above, Professor Sundram Pillai remarks that 'It is impossible to doubt that, in 384, Trivandrum, like so many other villages, had a sabha or association, with a Sabhanjita, Chairman, or Secretary of its own, and that it used to meet on occasions of importance in the old temple of Mitrānandapuram, about a couple of furlongs to the west of the shrine of Sri Padmanābha. The south-western corner of the courtyard of the temple is still pointed out as the sacred spot where the Sabha used to meet of old, and the word "Tek" or South, in one inscription gives no dubious guide to the spot. The raised floor of this hall still remains. . . ."[91]

It has already been pointed out that earth was called 'Sarpa-rājñī', meaning the queen of serpents. Kadrū or earth[92] was the mother of serpents; hence serpents are also called Kādraveya. When the earth mother took away her daughter Sītā to her home in the underworld (rasā-tala), her throne was borne aloft by serpents (VII.97.19). Rasā-tala is also called Nāga-loka, or the region inhabited by the serpents.[93] It is believed that serpents are immortal due to their power of shedding their old skins.[94] Hence, serpents were identified with women due to their power of rejuvenating themselves through menstruation. Bāṇa narrates in his Kādambarī that queen Vilāsavatī, in order to overcome her childlessness, used to take dips into ponds dedicated to serpent goddesses. The author knows of such a pond near Sakri in Dhule district, Maharashtra, and it is known as Nāga-āī or Cobra-mother.

Due to the identification of serpents with earth, Gṛhya-sūtras ordain that a sacrifice should be offered to the serpents in the month of Śrāvaṇa (July-August).[95] Pāraskara directs that Varuṇa and his royal kinsmen should be invoked in this Śravaṇā sacrifice. Vidhura Jātaka says that Varuṇa was the king of serpents.[96] This denotes that Varuṇa was either the divine consort or son of the earth goddess. Hence, the Śrvaṇā sacrifice, instead of being just a ritual of safe-guarding oneself from serpents, was intended to secure abundant harvest. The Sītā sacrifice which immediately follows it, bears out this contention.

It is only in this context that the significance of the serpent-grove in the south-western corner of Taravad-clan premises of the Nayars can be understood:

> The construction and outward appearance of a Taravad house exhibit several interesting details. The ground on which it is built should be slightly inclined towards the east. It is confined by a square border-line and divided into four equal parts. The north-eastern and south-western parts of the grounds are used for different buildings, the south-eastern corner for the cemetery. In the centre of the south-western corner, the small wood comprising the serpent grove, so important in Nayar religious life, is situated. . . .[97]

Such a sacred grove is called Nagattan Kavu, and women in their monthly courses are forbidden to approach it.[98] The apparent reason underlying the sanctity of this direction seems to be that it brought the life-giving rains:

> Their (monsoons') days of birth, namely, Tiruvātira (the sixth asterism) in Mithunam (June-July) of Chēran, Svāti (the 16th lunar asterism, Arcturus) in Tulām (October-November) of Chōlan, Mūlam (the 19th constellation) in Kumbham (February-March) of Pāṇḍian are worthy of remembrance. For, on these auspicious days commence the monsoons, namely, the South West monsoon in Malabar, the North-East monsoon or Tulā Varsham in the kingdom of Chōla, and the rainy season in the kingdom of Pandya. . . .[99]

The two cities of the great pre-Aryan civilisation, Harappa and Mohenjao-daro, were situated on the banks of the rivers Ravi and Sindhu respectively. The harvests raised on the silts deposited by these rivers every year, generated and sustained this civilisation. The general direction in which the Sindhu flows after entering the Punjab right up to its union with the Arabia Sea, is south-westerly.

According to Mm. Siddheshwarshastri Chitrav, Nirṛti was also

known as Tri-yuta. That this interpretation is not arbitrary is proved by the Ṛg-veda itself. Ṛk VIII.24.24 says that Indra is the knower of Nirṛtis. It means that Nirṛti was conceived in the plural. Ṛk X.114.2 provides the conclusive evidence:

> The priests heard far away, as they are ordered, serve the three Nirṛtis, for well they know them.
>
> Sages have traced the cause that first produced them, dwelling in distant and mysterious chambers.[100]

Ṛg-veda contains in all ten Āpri hymns-I.13, 142, 188; II.3; III.4; V.5; VII.2; IX.5; X.70, 110. Before slaughtering a sacrificial animal, Āpri mantras were recited and fire carried round it.[101] Āprī deities are eleven, and they are: (1) blazing fire (Suprasiddha Agni), (2) fire residing in the two fire-producing wooden sticks (Tanūnapāt or Nārāśmsa Agni), (3) invoked fire (Iḷa Agni), (4) Darbha grass (Barhi), (5) door of the sacrificial hall, (6) dawn and night (Uṣasā-Nakta), (7) two divine hotṛ priests, (8) three goddesses (tisro devyaḥ), (9) Tvaṣṭṛ, (10) sacrificial post (Vanaspati), and (11) Svāhā (hail).[102]

According to commentators the three goddesses are (1) Saras-vati (river), (2) Ilā (earth or food), and (3) Bhārati (Vāk or speech),[103] from which it can be dedued that the goddess-triad originally was a non-Aryan one.[104] *Vedic Index* states, '...In the Apri hymns occurs a goddess Bhārati, the personified divine protective power of the Bharatas....'[105] Nighaṇṭu gives two synonyms of Vāk: (1) Bhārati (I-11-16), and (2) gaṇa (tribe) (I.11.38). Ṛk IX.97.34 invokes Vāk also as three Vāks (tisro Vācaḥ).

The Raja-sūya sacrifice commences with obliations to Nirṛti. Keith explains the three mantras of Taittirīya Saṁhitā as follows:

> The three mantras are a part of the offering to Nirṛti; with the first an offering is made in the Gārhapatya to appease Rudra; then by the south the sacrificer goes, taking an ember from the fire, to where there is a natural cleft (iriṇa) and deposits his ember there and makes an offering with the second Mantra....[106]

The ritual makes it clear that the three Ambās or mothers of Tryambaka Rudra were none other than Nirṛti herself. In the horse sacrifice the three Ambās, namely Ambā, Ambikā, and Ambālikā,[107] 'mime' coition with the slaughtered horse who is addressed by them as 'gaṇa-pati', meaning lord of the tribe. From this it becomes evident that Nirṛti was the triune mother of the tribe.

The three characteristics of Nirṛti are explained by the 'tisro devīḥ'.

Nirṛti was (1) Sarasvati or river goddess, (2) Ilā, or earth mother, and (3) Bhāratī or tribal mother.

The triune mother phenomenon is not peculiar to India. The ancient Greeks had a similar mother triad in the Moirai, namely Gaia, Themis, and Phibe, which are but the names of her three aspects: earthly, fatidic, and heavenly.[108] Al-Uzza, the great goddess of the ancient Arabs, was also threefold:

> ...The Great Goddess was threefold, being at the same time one and three, 'The three Holy Virgins', Al-Ilat, Al-Uzza, and Manat. 'Al-Uzza' is merely a cult epithet, meaning 'the Powerful One'; Al-Ilat is the feminine form of Ilu, or Allah, and may be rendered 'the Goddess'. Manat, which is the feminine form of Mani, stood particularly for the conception of fate or destiny. The word 'mana' is still commonly used by the Arabs in the sense of 'luck'. The threefold Arabian Goddess thus corresponds in character to the Greek Moirai, the Fates, and the Nordic Nornes.[109]

Thomson discloses the economic and social functions of these triune goddesses:

> The Moirai originated as impersonations of ancestral custom, as symbols of the economic and social functions of primitive communism – the sharing of game, the sharing of booty, the sharing of land, the sharing of labour between the clans; that is to say, they grew out of the neolithic mother-goddesses, who, emanating from the female elders of the matriarchal clan, symbolised the collective authority of countless generations of ancestresses who had held undisputed sway over the lives of men since they had lived in clans. Aeschylus remembered that in the beginning of the world the Moirai had been supreme.[110]

Ṛk X.114.3 gives more information about Nirṛti:

> The youthful one, well-shaped, with four locks braided, brightened with oil, puts on the ordinances.
>
> Two birds of mighty power are seated near her, there where the Deities receive their portion.[111]

Ṛk X.114.8 identifies Nirṛti with Vāk. The function of the tribal mother Nirṛti was to apportion the tribal wealth equally among the tribal members.

An Indus stamp-seal depicts the scene of a sacrifice. A naked goddess, wearing a three-horned crown stands in an aśvattha (ficus religiosa) tree, and priests wearing bird-masks are worshipping her.[112] The plant hymn says that the ficus religiosa tree is the home of the plants.[113] The sacred tree of Varuṇa, the descendant of Nirṛti, was, according to Rk I.24.7, ficus religiosa.[114]

The three characteristics of Nirṛti, overlordship of water, earth and tribe, in course of time were transformed into three guṇas. For Nirukta (X.23), commenting on Ṛk X.121.1, declares that '. . .when a woman receives the life-germs (guṇan) and her own life-germs are brought into contact with them fertilisation takes place. . .'[115] Water is white, so is the guṇa called satva; earth is black – so is the guṇa tamas; overlordship of tribe is red – and so is rajas. With these three guṇas, Nirṛti, transformed into the Sāṅkhya Prakṛti, propagates the world by promiscuous copulation with innumerable Purusas:

With the one unborn female, red, white and black,
Who produces many creatures like herself,
There lies the unborn male taking his delight.
Another unborn male leaves her with whom he
has had his delight.[116]

References

1. *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XII.62-66
2. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School* etc., H.O.S., Vol. XIX, pp. 314-315.
3. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 64.
4. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, p. 266.
5. Winternitz, M., *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I., p. 69; Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, p. 529.
6. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 27.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. II, pp. 563-567.
10. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 81.
11. Robertson Smith, W., *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 92-93.
12. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, I.8.1; *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, IX.35.
13. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, pp. 58-60.
14. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 100-109.
15. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Marathi trans.), p. 195.
16. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV.2.6; *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XII.75.102.
17. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
18. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 316-318.
19. Chitrav, Sidheshwarshastri, *Rg-Veda* (Marathi trans.), p. 960.
20. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VI.1.6; *Mahābhārata*, I.20.23.
21. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 292-293.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
23. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, I.5.4.1; VII.3.1.3.
24. Keith, A.B., *Rg-veda Brāhmanas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, p. 248.

25. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIII, p. 451.
26. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 294.
27. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. II, pp. 72-73.
28. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 45-46; Vol. III, pp. 193-195.
29. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
30. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II. P. I., pp. 155-156.
31. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIII, p. 176-177.
32. *Ibid.*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 366-367.
33. *Mahābhārata*, I.66.1-3; *Bhāgavata*, VI.6.17-18.
34. *Mahābhārata*, I.96.100, I.66.17-18, *Bhāgavata*, VI.6.10-11.
35. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Aditya, *s.v.*
36. *Ibid.*, Viśva, *S.V.*
37. *Mahābhārata*, XIII.91.30-37.
38. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II. pp. 85, 286; Vol. XIV, pp. 117-118, 215.
39. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218.
40. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I, pp. 229-230.
41. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, pp. 93-94.
42. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 26.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
45. Ray, P.C., *The Mahabharata*, Vol. I, p. 356.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 355-356.
47. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 198-199.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
51. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, pp. 82-83.
52. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 649, 666.
53. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, pp. 361-362.
54. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, I.38.3.13; II.43.2.10.
55. *Ibid.*, *Aṅgutiara-nikāya-pāli*, V.15.3.
56. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 535-536, Vol. II., p. 8.
57. *Shabara Bhāṣya*, trans. Jha, G., Vol. I, p. 4.
58. Thomson, G., *Religion*, p. 9.
59. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. I, pp. 472-475.
60. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 55.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 55.
62. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 681.
63. *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXIII.18-32; *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VII.4.19.
64. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 406.
65. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, pp. 233, 133.
66. *Mahābhārata*, I.63.78; I.104.13; III.307.25.
67. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 99-100; Ehrenfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, p. 66.
68. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 413-414.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 443-445.
70. *Mahābhārata*, I.82.9,13.
71. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, pp. 179-180.

72. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Mahāvagga-pāli*, VIII.2.6.
73. Ehrenfels, O.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.
74. *Naiṣadha-carita*, III.21; *Raghu-vaṁśa*, VIII.63; *Mālavikā-Agnimitra*, Act III.
75. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School etc.*, H.O.S., Vol. XVIII, p. 120.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 20; Vol. XIX, pp. 407-408; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 230.
77. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 142.
78. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Pāthika-vagga*, IV.3.15.
79. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 14-15.
80. Ehrenfels, O.R., *op. cit.*, p. 53.
81. Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 31-32.
82. Gurdon, P.R.T., *The Khasis*, pp. 33-34.
83. *History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, p. 32.
84. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIII, p. 171.
85. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 294-296.
86. Robertson Smith, W., *op. cit.*, p. 42.
87. Whitney, W.D., *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā*, p. 663.
88. Robertson Smith, W., *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.
89. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. III., pp. 80-81.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
91. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 254-255.
92. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VI.1.6.1.
93. *Amara-kośa*, 439.
94. Frazer, J.G., *The Scapegoat*, pp. 302-304.
95. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 128, 328-329.
96. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 22.546, 1356, 1359.
97. Ehrenfels, O.R., *op. cit.*, p. 61.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
99. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.
100. Griffith, R., *Hymns of the Rg-veda*, Vol. II, p. 557.
101. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII.16.
102. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
103. *Ibid.*
104. Kosambi, D.D., *Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 80.
105. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 97.
106. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114.
107. *Taittiriya Saṁhitā*, VII.4.19, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXIII.18.
108. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 148.
109. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.
110. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I, p. 339.
111. Griffith, R., *op. cit.*, p. 558.
112. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 60.
113. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV.2.6.2; *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XII.79; *Rg-veda*, X.97.5.
114. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
115. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 161.
116. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 403.

6

Matriarchy

In the Rāja-sūya sacrifice, the person who was consecrated to kingship was first initiated as a Brahman before the consecration. Coomaraswamy observes correctly that in every other kind of sacrifice also the sacrificer had to be initiated as a Brahman, meaning he had to 'mime' his rebirth as a Brahman:

> It must be borne in mind, again, that the Rāja-sūya is an 'analogous' rite, and that every Sacrificer, being reborn of the Sacrifice, the Spiritual power (brahma), is born a Brahman (brāhmaṇa, patronymic from brahma), and the initiate (dīkṣita) is for this very reason to be addressed as a Brahman, whatever his caste may have been (ŚB: III.2.1.40): 'The Sacrificer is the Sacerdotium (brahma), the initiated is born again of the sacrifice. . .he attains to Priesthood' (brāhmaṇatām upaiti, AB.VII.22-23).[1]

That is why the king-elect, initiated as a brahman, was addressed by all the chief priests as a Brahman in Taittirīya Saṁhitā (I.8.16):

> . . .The priests and Ratnins*. . .then sit round in a circle round the king in order to do homage to him, the Adhvaryu being seated towards the east, the Brahman towards the south, the Hotṛ towards the west, the Udgātṛ towards the north. The king then addresses the Adhvaryu with 'O Brahman, (Om)!' that priest replies, 'Thou, O king, art Brahman, thou art Savitṛ of true impulsion.' In the same way the king addresses the Brahman, 'O Brahman!' and the priest replies, 'Thou, O king, art Brahman, thou art Indra, of true energy!' Then the Hotṛ, who replies, '. . .Thou art Mitra, the most kindly!' – The Udgātṛ: '. . .thou art Varuṇa, of the true laws!'[2]

But, strange enough, the Brahmanhood left him as soon as he had attained to it:

> . . .It is, in fact, explicit, that having put off his Royalty and become a Brahman, the king in turn abandons this priestly character: 'when he concludes, he assumes his Kṣatriya character, calling to witness Agni, Vāyu, and Āditya (the cosmic Purohitas) that "Now I am he who I am"' (AB.VII.22).[3]

Why should Brahmanhood leave him? The answer has to be sought in the ritual itself. Immediately after being declared a Brahman by the

*Also called rāja-kartās, meaning king-makers.

chief officiating priests, the king traced by the sphya (wooden sword) the figure of a dice board and placed five dice on it.[4] As already explained, this was the ritual of apportioning the rāṣṭra or tribal land, first into the phratry shares, and then into clan shares. *It is this function that gave rise to kingship in India, and it is this kingship itself that ended the Brahman-hood of the king, the two functions being mutually exclusive.*

What is this wooden sword that is called sphya? The Atharvavedic hymn XI.3, extolling the rice-dish, shorn of its mystic pretensions, describes but the agricultural and culinary processes by which it comes into being. The ninth Rk gives the function of the sphya:

> 9. The threshing-floor [its] receptacle, the two splints (sphya) [its] shoulders, the two poles (iṣā) [its] spines (anūkhyā).[5]

The original function of the sphya is disclosed by M.M. Kunte:

> ...The sword used on the occasion of all sacrifices is called sphya in the sacrificial literature. It is to be connected with the root sphai – the sword sphya being the means of increase. Though the sacrificial sphya has the form of a sword, it is used as well for digging.[6]

The sphya originally served the purpose of a hoe; it was a pointed wooden stick, the point sometimes hardened in fire, with which women all over the world started their agricultural activities. The menfolk cleared a patch of ground by primitive instruments and fire, and the womenfolk did all the work of sowing, weeding and gathering the crop. Frazer cites the examples drawn from every continent which was still inhabited by primitive peoples subsisting on agriculture and hunting, out of which the cases of the Zulus and Barongas of Africa are reproduced below:

> ...among the Zulus, 'when a piece of land has been selected for cultivation, the task of clearing it belongs to the men. If the ground be much encumbered, this becomes a laborious undertaking, for their axe is very small, and when a large tree has to be encountered, they can only lop the branches; fire is employed when it is needful to remove the trunk. The reader will therefore not be surprised that the people usually avoid bushland, though they seem to be aware of its superior quality.... The entire business of digging, planting, and weeding devolves on them (women); ... With this (hoe) rude and heavy instrument the woman digs, plants and weeds her garden....' Similarly among the Baronga of Delagoa Bay, 'when the rains begin to fall...they hasten to sow. With her hoe in her hands, the mistress of the field walks with little steps; every time she lifts a clod of earth well broken up, and in the hole thus made she plants three or four grains of maize and covers them up.... They plant three or four years successively in the same field before it is exhausted. As for enriching the soil with manure, they never think of it....'[7]

Land was tilled in a similar manner by the Indian tribals.[8] As to the reason of agriculture being the exclusive province of women, Frazer cites a peculiar example from the Indian Archipelago, generalising the mentality of all the primitive agriculturists the world over:

> ...among the Indians of the Orinoco, who with an infinitude of pains cleared the jungle for cultivation by cutting down the forest trees with their stone axes, burning the fallen lumber, and breaking up the ground with wooden instruments hardened in the fire, the task of sowing the maize and planting the roots was performed by women alone; and when the Spanish missionaries expostulated with the men for not helping their wives in this toilsome duty, they received for answer that as women knew how to conceive seed and bear children, so seeds and roots planted by them bore fruit far more abundantly than if they had been planted by male hands.[9]

As the dice board was the idealisation of the division and distribution of the tribal land, in the same manner the wooden sword* was the modification beyond recognition of the crude wooden hoe.

The Rāja-sūya sacrifice described by Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā has miraculously preserved the memory of how the rāṣṭra tribal land first came into being. With the Rks X.1-4 the king accepted the waters of Sarasvatī and other streams. The first mantra says that the waters of Sarasvatī are sweet-tasting, food-yielding and king-producing. The Rks 2-4 repeatedly invoke the waters as rāṣṭra-giving (rāṣṭra-da). The second mantra says that the waters of the streams which come to the sacrificial session are by their very nature rāṣṭra – giving.[10]

Scholars are not agreed over the identity of Sarasvatī. Some think that Sindhu is meant, while others believe that she was a tributary of Sindhu, dried up in later Vedic times.[11] Kosambi observes that out of the seven rivers of the ancient Punjab Ghaggar and Sarasūti have dried up.[12]

The two kinds of agricultural systems, one depending on river irrigation and the other on rain, seem to have been differentiated from quite ancient times. Rāmāyaṇa (II.101.45) says that the agriculture of the Kosalas did not depend on the celestial rains (a-deva-mātṛkaḥ). The land of the Pāṇḍava tribe of the Kuru people also did not depend on the celestial rains (na kṛṣir deva-mātṛkā. II.5.78). Agriculture

*The sword held by the mother goddess Durgā in one of her hands was originally the sphya.

depending on rain was called deva-mātṛka or Indravaktra.[13] A-deva-mātṛka or nadī-mātṛka agriculture meant agriculture fed by artificial irrigation and Sindhu-vaktra meant agriculture fed by river-inundations. Kosambi reproduces the earliest available eye-witness account of the Sindhu-vaktra system of agriculture:

> The oldest known description of the Indus climate and agriculture on flood-irrigated lands comes from Alexander's captains. It is all the more valuable because Strabo (15.1.17-18) was puzzled by the apparent discrepancy between conditions in the Upper Punjab and down the Indus: '(Aristoboulos said) they spent ten months on the voyage (down the Indus) without ever seeing rain, even when the Eastern winds were at their height. The rivers, however, were full, and inundated the plains. The sea was found unnavigable from the prevalence of country winds, but no land breezes succeeded. Nearchos writes to the same effect, but does not agree with Aristoboulos regarding the summer rains, for he says that the plains are watered with rain in summer, but are without rain in winter. Both writers speak about the rising of the rivers. Nearchos says that when they encamped near the Achesines (Chenāb) they were obliged to shift their quarters to higher ground when the river rose above its former level, and this was forty cubits, of which twenty filled the channel upto the brim, and the other twenty inundated the plains. They concur also in stating that the cities built upon mounds become as islands, as in Egypt and Ethiopia, and that the inundation ceases after the setting of Arcturus when the waters subside. They add that the land, while still but half dried, is sown, and though scratched into furrows by any common labourer, it nevertheless brings what is planted to perfection and makes the fruits of good quality.'[14]

That is why the waters of the Sarasvatī and other rivers were called rāṣṭra-dā.

Nirukta (II.3) derives the word for king, rājan, from the root rāj. Nighaṇṭu contains the root rāj (rājati. II.21-4), but does not give the derivative rājan, while the word for queen, rāṣṭrī (II.22.1), is given.

Rk V.46.8 enumerates the wives of gods as follows – Indrāṇī, wife of Indra; Agnāyī, wife of Agni; Aśvinī, common wife of the two Aśvins; Rodasī, common wife of the Maruts; Varuṇāṇī, wife of Varuṇa; but Rāṭ is wife to no god. Nirukta (XII.46) gives the etymology of Rāṭ as 'one who rules'. Hence, Rāṭ and rāṣṭrī are synonymous.

From this it appears that Nighaṇṭu was compiled in a period when as yet kingship was still *derived* from woman. It means that kingship originated with woman. Why should kingship originate with woman? Because, kingship was derived from rāṣṭra, from the most important function of apportioning the rāṣṭra land among the tribal constituents,

which was first performed by woman. It was due to this that the first ruler of men received the appellation 'rāṣṭrī'. Rk VIII.100.10 tells us that Vāk was the first rāṣṭrī:

> When Vāc, speaking unknown words, sat down (niṣasāda) as the charming queen of the gods (rāṣṭrī), the four milked food and milk, but where did her best portion go?[15]

The four evidently are – (1) Vāk (Bhāratī), (2) Sarasvatī, (3) Ilā, and (4) Tvaṣṭṛ. Durga explains that by 'sitting down' (niṣasāda) among the gods Vāk produces rain. But how can she 'produce' anything just by sitting down? The root sad from which ni-ṣaṣāda is derived, also means to lie down. The triune tribal mother Vāk, as a dharma-natī, 'lay down' with her sacred consort Tvaṣṭṛ amidst the divine tribal festive assembly and thereby generated rain. Rain was her best (parama), and it went to rejuvenate nature.

Nirṛti was called devī. Niruktā (VII.15) gives the etymology of deva as follows:

> ...*Deva* (god) is (so called) from making gifts (√*dā*) or from being brilliant (√*dīp*), from being radiant (√*dyut*) or because his sphere is heaven. He who is called god (*deva*) is also called deity (*devatā*)....[16]

Durga thinks that devī means 'giver of waters'.[17]

The dice board, which originated from rāṣṭra, was also called 'adhi-devana'. The rāṣṭra-bhṛt hymn of Taittirīya Saṁhitā (III.4.8) includes oblation to adhi-devana. The rāṣṭra-bhṛt hymn is followed by a hymn to devikās, namely, Anumati, Rākā, Sinīvālī, and Kuhū. They are various nights deified into goddesses. Anumati is the earlier day of full moon; Rākā is the later day of full moon, Sinīvālī is the earlier day of new moon, and Kuhū is the later day of new moon.[18] As already noted, Nirṛti was also called amāvāsyā, the new moon night. Indian calendar, like all other ancient calendars, was and still is a lunar one. It is based not on days, but nights (tithi). Hence, these devikās were but the different manifestations of devī Nirṛti.

Devinī, according to the Atharva-vedic hymn IV.38.1, was the female dice-player. Devara, which in earlier Vedic times meant 'second husband', later on came to mean husband's brother; but, commenting on Ṛk X.40.2, Nirukta (III.15) renders devara as a dice-player, deriving it from the root 'div', meaning 'to play'.[19] The words deva, devatā, devī, devin, devinī, and devikā, therefore, originally must have been derived from the same root, namely div. *Hence, it can be*

affirmed that devī originally was the synonym of rāstrī, and devī Nirrti was the first queen of the pre-Aryan matriarchal Indus (Sindhu) civilisation.

It has already been shown that kula-pā or kula-ṭā headed the clan, janapada-kalyāṇī or janī headed the phratry, and gaṇikā headed the tribe. *But, the illustrations of these offices were drawn from a period when matriarchy was already a thing of the past for the concerned regions of India, and women held on to these positions merely on the strength of priestly magical functions which had lost their former all-pervasive social efficacy.* But, when she exercised the actual and magical function of apportioning communal wealth in land and its produce, she was rāṣṭrī or rāṭ, and was addressed as devī, or ambā, or mā. *Women ruled the tribe and its constituents politically, marriage was matrilochal, and descent and inheritance were in the female line. This is called matriarchy, or rule of mother.*

In India the term for matriarchy was 'strī-rājya', meaning rule of woman. We come across the earliest mention of it in Mahābhārata (XII.4.7), where it is said that Śṛgāla, king of the Strīrājya, attended the svayaṁ-vara of the daughter of the king of the Kaliṅgas. The country where this Strī-rājya was cannot be identified. Paṇḍu's persuasion of his wife Kuntī for niyoga has already been quoted, and from his description of the Uttara-Kurus, it appears that it was also a strī-rājya. Patañjali's mention in his Mahābhāṣya of 'Kaśmīra-rājñī'[20] and Kalhaṇa's description of Kashmīr in his Rāja-taraṅgiṇī, taken with its geographical location to the north of the Kurus of Hastināpura, leads us to assume that the persent state of Kashmir itself was called Uttara-Kuru in ancient times. Rāmāyaṇa (VII.87-89). Mahābhārata (I.75. 18-25), and Bhāgavata Purāṇa (IX.1.13-42) narrate the story of Ilā, the queen of the Bāhlika country,[21] which denotes that Bāhlika was also a matriarchal country. Bhāgavata (IX.1.41) suggests that the Dravid South India was once ruled by queens. According to the Greek Megasthenes (B.C. 400), the Pāṇḍya country was ruled by a woman.[22] Atharva-veda (V.22.7-8, 14) mentions Mūjavat, Bāhlika, Mahāvṛṣa, Aṅga, and Magadha as matriarchal countries in contradistinction to Vāhīka, Āraṭṭa, Kāraskara, Māhiṣaka, Kaliṅga, Kerala, Karkoṭaka (capital of the Mālavyas[23]), and Viraka (Avantī?[24]) mentioned by Mahābhārata as matrilineal. The countries of Karūṣa and Malada on the south of the confluence of the Ganges and the Sarayū, according to Rāmāyaṇa (I.24-26), were ruled by the Yakṣi Tāṭakā. Mahābhārata tells us that

the countries south of the Ganges and adjacent to the Southern Pañcāla, were ruled by a 'demoness' called Hidimbā (I.151.59), and the city of Eka-cakrā by the demon Baka (I.156-163). According to Hari-vaṁśa (I.6) the country adjacent to Mathurā and on the banks of the Yamunā called Śa-kaṭa (with temple-land) was ruled by the demoness Pūtanā. Vātsyāyana in his Kāma-sūtra (II.5.27) also mentions strī-rājya; but the commentator's explanation of its being to the west of the Vajravanta country is too vague to make any definite guess possible. From Mahābhārata's description of Māhiṣmatī (II.31.21-59), the capital of a country on the banks of the Narmadā, which was once also the capital of Sahasra-Arjuna of the Haihayas, it appears that it was also a strī-rājya; for the account says that on the strength of a boon by the fire-god, the women of Māhiṣmatī could not be controlled by men, and became completely unrestricted in their behaviour (II.31.37-38).

Matriarchy in its most essential characteristics was preserved up to the first quarter of the present century by the Khasis of Assam. A faithful account of their social organisation has been left to us by a British bureaucrat, Lieutenant-Colonel P.R.T. Gurdon. There were over a dozen states in the Khasi hills. One of the important states, Khyrim, was still ruled by a woman who was also its high priestess.[25] In other states, succession to the head of the states and their villages was matrilineal, i.e., men in the female line succeeded to these posts. As for the succession to the head of a state, it was inherited by the sons of the eldest uterine sister according to seniority in age.[26] Irawati Karve explains:

> ...a *Siem* is succeeded by his eldest surviving uterine brother, failing brothers by the eldest of his sister's sons, failing these by the eldest son of his sister's daughter and failing him by the eldest son of his mother's sister. When there are no male heirs he would be succeeded by his eldest uterine sister, etc. A female *Siem* would be succeeded by her eldest son.[27]

In all these states priestesses officiated at the sacrifices and the male priests were but their deputies.[28] The priestess of the clan was the youngest daughter of the female head of the clan.[29] Descent and inheritance were in the female line. Clan land was managed by the Knie, mother's brother.[30] A woman married outside the clan, and her husband was just a visitor and was called 'a begetter'.[31] Charles Lyall describes the society in a nutshell:

> In the first place, the social organisation presents one of the most perfect

examples still surviving of matriarchal institutions, carried out with a logic and thoroughness which, to those who are accustomed to regard the status and authority of the father as the foundation of society, are exceedingly remarkable. Not only is the mother the head and the source, and the only bond of union of the family, in the most primitive part of the hills, the Synteng country, she is also the only owner of property, and through her alone is inheritance transmitted. The father has no kinship with his children, who belong to their mother's clan; what he earns goes to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats in his mother-in-law's house, but visits it only after dark.... In the veneration of ancestors, which is the foundation of tribal piety, the primal ancestress (Ka Iawbei) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (maw kynthei), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side.[32]

The pre-Islamic period of the Arabs is called 'Jāhiliyah'.[33] 'Asabiyah' or the attachment to the tribe and its constituents was so overriding a sentiment that a bard of jāhiliyah sang forth:

Be loyal to the tribe; its claim upon its members is strong enough to make a husband give up his wife.[34]

The Bedouin Arabs of North Arabia, who, according to the Caliph Umar, 'Furnished Islam with its raw material', were pastoral nomads, and entered history with the advent of Islam, while the Southern Arabians fashioned one of the earliest civilisations of mankind. The poet al-Qutāmi sums up the way of life of the Bedouins as follows:

Our business is to make raids on the enemy, on our neighbour and on our brother, in case we find none to raid but a brother.[36]

Hence, it seems that pastoral nomads are not able to retain or develop the phratry constituent of the tribe, while they attain to the family stage in the clan earlier than an agricultural society. A Bedouin encampment was formed of several family tents called hayy and the members constituting it – a clan or quwm. The tent itself seems to have been originally a matriarchal clan.[37] The head of a patriarchal clan was called a Sheikh.[38] Several such kindred clans went to make a tribe which was called a qabīlah. A member of a qabīlah called himself a son or banu of that quabilah;[39] as a member of the Sakya tribe of Buddha was called Sakya-putta.

Even in their pastoral and hence patriarchal stage, the Bedouin clans retained feminine names, which denoted that not long ago they also had been in the matriarchal stage:

...'All the children of Ilja,' says Abu'l 'Fedah, 'are issue of the above-named lady, Chindif; and they are named after her without reference to their father. They are called Banu Chindif, nor is the name of Ilja mentioned.' So the Banu Mozaina are not named after their father 'Amr, but after their mother. So with the Banu Oqda.... The tribe of Levi, according to Robertson Smith, was originally metronymic; it was then the tribe of Leah, for whom a husband Levi, had to be invented. Even Israel, the tribe which gave its name to the whole nation, was originally the tribe of Sarah, Israel being the son of Sarah....[40]

Water, pasturage, and cultivable land were still the common property of the tribe.[41]

Southern Arabia was formed of Yaman, Ḥaḍramawt and the neighbouring coast. We hear about one of the earliest queens of South Arabia, the queen of Sheba (Arabic Bilqis) in the reign of Soloman, the king of Israel.[42] The Assyrian sovereign Tiglath Pilaser III (B.C. 745-727) conquered Syria and its environs, which were ruled by queens, one of whom was called Zabibi, and the other Samsi (Shams or Shamsiyah). Sennocherib in B.C. 688 'carried away to Nineveh the local gods and the queen (Telkhunu, Te'elkhunu) herself, who was also the priestess...'[43]

It becomes evident that the queens of the Arabs like Te'elkhunu, Zabibi and Shamsiyah were the equivalents of Nirṛti and Vāk. According to the accounts of the classical authors of the Greeks and the Romans, the Arabs of this period lived in ritual sexual promiscuity and polyandry:

These same classical writers were greatly impressed by the wealth of the South Arabians. Strabo mentions cities 'adorned with beautiful temples and palaces.' Pliny, using Aelius Gallus for authority, concurs.

...Strabo tells us that in South Arabia polyandry of the type in which a number of brothers married the same wife prevailed, that people lived incestuously and the law of primogeniture, by which the eldest became the chief was observed....[44]

Briffault quotes the authority of two celebrated Arab authors:

...The philosophical Arab writer, Al-Biruni, in mentioning the polyandry of the Hindus and the natives of Chitral, remarks that the Arabs had exactly 'similar institutions', and that 'several men cohabited with one wife'. Bukhari likewise says that among the Arabs in the days of Ignorance 'it was a custom for a number of men, perhaps as many as ten, to have one wife between them....'[45]

Briffault gives an interesting account of the Berbers of North

Africa, who even after embracing Islam, persisted in clinging to matriarchal customs:

> ...The Berbers of Algeria and Tunisia have to a large extent adopted Muslim customs and are now thoroughly patriarchal in their social organisation, but those tribes which withdrew to the interior rather than yield to foreign invasion, and which are known as Taureg (singr : Targi), have preserved both their ancient language and their social constitution....
>
> ...Their ancestors in Roman times, the Numidians...were named after their mothers;...The women retained complete control of their property after marriage, and are not obliged to contribute towards the husband's household expenses, nor do they consent to do so.... An old German poet who accompanied some crusading expedition mentions that in Tunis 'It is the women and not the men who inherit property.' The matriarchal character of Targi society was noticed by the first traveller who described them in modern times, the Arab Ibn Batuta. 'The women,' he says, 'are exceedingly beautiful, and they are of more consequence than the men. The character of these people is indeed strange, for they are quite impervious to jealousy. None is named after his father, but each derives his descent from his uncle on the mother's side. Only a man's sister's children inherit from him, to the exclusion of his own children....As regards the women, they are not timid in the presence of man, nor do they cover their faces with a veil although they are zealous at their prayers. Whoso wishes to marry any of them may do so, but the women do not follow their husbands, and should any of them wish to do so, her relatives would prevent it."[46]

Though Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, the three great religions of the world, right from their commencement have been patriarchal, they have not been able to overcome the most important vestiges of matriarchy in regions or countries which passed over to the agricultural stage without previously having to go through the pastoral stage. Though the Arabs converted a sizable section of Malayalis to Islam, who together with the proselytes came to be known as Maplas, it is found that an overwhelming section of this community remained up to quite recent times a part and parcel of the Malayali nationality, especially in its matrilineal and matrilocal aspect.[47]

The renowned ancient agricultural civilization of Egypt started its career with matriarchy, and the vestiges of matriarchy persisted up to the eve of the Arab conquest. The basic unit of Egyptian society was 'nome' which means a maternal clan.[48] Descent was matrilineal.[49] The priestly function was originally exercised from the clan to the tribal level by women.[50] It has already been demonstrated that the original 'dharma' of mankind was ritual copulation or union. Egyptian priestesses, from the clan mothers to the tribal mother, were but the

sacred consorts of the gods whom they served.[51] The most exalted title of a princess was 'Royal Mother' or Amba.[52] The Nirṛti of the Egyptians was Isis. It was she who 'discovered wheat and barley growing wild'. She was born of the sacred marriage between the earth-god Seb, also pronounced as Keb or Geb, and the sky-goddess Nut. The myth, as told by Plutarch, goes on to say that the birth of Isis was made possible by the game of draughts that was played between the god Thoth and the moon goddess.[53] This muddled version of the original myth still bears testimony to the fact that the first queen of the Egyptians was born out of the function of periodically apportioning the tribal cultivated land by lots among the phratries and clans of the Egyptian tribe.

The Egyptians believed that every princess was a born-queen, while no male, even though born in the royal family, was a born-king, but became so only by marrying a princess.[54] The 'horrifying' behaviour of the ancient Saxon and Danish kings, marrying the very step-mothers and old queens of their predecessors, can only be explained on the basis of the custom that kingship derived from woman.[55]

That originally a person could become a king only by marrying the female heir of a matriarchal kingdom is clearly referred to by Rg veda itself. Kosambi gives the best translation of the Rk X.95.5 in which Urvaśī tells Purūravas:

> 'Thrice a day didst thou ram me with the member, and impregnated me unwilling (as I was). Purūravas, I yielded to thy desires; O hero, then wert thou king of my body (tanvas)."[56]

As already shown, Urvaśī also was a mother goddess, a form of earth mother, and hence an eternal virgin acknowledging nobody as the 'king' of her body. Kosambi, in spite of his illuminating exposition of Indian mother goddesses, has failed to take account of this crucial aspect. Along with all other Vedic scholars, he also takes 'tanvas' in the genetive case; but, if it is taken in the ablative, then the clause reads as follows: 'O hero, then thou became king *from* my body.' *It was through ritual copulation or sacred marriage with the devī or rāṣṭrī Urvaśī that Purūravas became a king.*

This derivation of kingship from woman has been preserved intact right up to recent times by Kerala. Padmanabh Menon states:

> There are four principal royal houses in Malabar, those of Travancore, Cohin, the Zamorin and Colastri....

First, that these four royal houses consist of princesses, whose sons are in the line of succession to the throne.

Second, that the eldest princess bears the title of queen mother, though it may happen that her son is not the reigning Rajah.

Third, that the minor kingdoms are called by the names of their families (i.e., matriarchal families).

Fourth, that the first or superior Rajah (most senior in age), being a descendant of the eldest princess, is designated by the name of the kingdom to which he belongs, though but a portion of it may be under his rule. The younger Rajahs, descended from the younger sisters, lose their family name. . . .[57]

Menon elaborates upon this matrilineal mode of royal succession:

. . .Succession. . .is in the female line, i.e., a deceased king is succeeded not by the issue of his own loins, but by the issue of his female relatives on the maternal side. The system may be styled the matriarchate in contradistinction to the patriarchate. The next point to be noted is that succession is regulated by *seniority in age* among male members, so long as there are any in the family, irrespective of their being the issue of the eldest female relation on the maternal side of the deceased king. There is nothing in the laws and customs of Malabar which prevents females from succeeding to the throne or governing the country. In default of male members succession devolves on the eldest female member. Barbosa is wrong in saying that ladies who are not blessed with male children are not considered capable of inheritance. In their turn, they are as much entitled to succeed as any who have given birth to male children. The ladies, however, are not precluded from adopting some male relative of a collateral branch and investing him with the government. But they are not bound to do so. They may all choose to govern in turn till it comes to the last, when, to save the line from extinction, *females of collateral branches with issue* or with the possibility of having issue may be adopted. . . .[58]

The rule of succession needs more explanation. The reigning king is called Mahā-rājā, and the crown prince Yuva-rāja. The seniormost princess is called Senior (Mūṭṭa) Rāṇi, and the next in age Junior (Ilaya) Rāṇi. The totality of the successors to a kingdom form a royal ṭaṙavād.

Now what is a ṭaṙavād? Irawati Karve calls it 'a matrilineal joint family'.[59] We have already seen that joint family comes into existence with the advent of private property in land. Though sale and purchase of land became prevalent in Mediaeval Kerala,[60] it only means that land had become a 'commodity', but it was far from being 'private property'. Private property in land is the invariable accompaniment of the rise of patriarchal family in which the male head of the family is vested with the ownership of the family land and women are deprived

of owning or inheriting anything except 'stri-dhana'. A patriarchal family is characterised by polygamy (except among the Christians), while a matrilineal 'family' is characterised by polyandry. Polyandry among the Nayars has died out only with the turn of the present century, but is still kept up among some backward castes.[61] Polyandry and private property in land are incompatible with each other. No better authority can be cited than the Khashas of the Himalayan foothills, who defend their polyandry in the following manner:

. . .The Khashas maintain that by practising polyandry they have retained their ancestral lands and that the neighbourly people who foolishly gave up polyandry split their lands among the heirs of various brothers and had to migrate to the plains and become household servants.[62]

The partition of ṭaṙavād lands into its branches (ṭāvalis) began only with the promulgation of the new tenancy laws. Prior to it, the lands cultivated by a ṭaṙavād and its ṭavalis were the common property of the ṭaṙavād.[63] As a parent clan threw up several clans out of itself, so also a ṭaṙavād split up into tavalis:

A Taravad, or matriarchal joint family, comprises all descendants of one common female ancestor. The husband, or husbands of the oldest ruling mother, who later on was represented by the. . .Karanavan, her brother, usually remained in their mother's Taravad and merely visited their wife or wives. If such a Taravad family increased too much in the course of time, so that members numbered a hundred or more, the joint-family was divided into tavazhis. Here again the principle of female descent prevailed, as also shown in the word itself, derived from the root ta, mother and vazhi, line of descent.[64]

The ṭāvalis and their mother ṭaṙavād were bound by the bonds of blood and land. A ṭaṙavād and its ṭāvalis were related to each other in exactly the same manner as a phratry and its clans were related to each other. The definition of jñāti by Nirukta (IV.21) is derived from such a uterine relationship.

Thus, a royal ṭaṙavād meant a royal phratry and it was made up of ṭāvalis or clans. The Cochin royal ṭaṙavād originally was comprised of five ṭāvalis – (1) Mūṭṭa Ṭāvali, (2) Elaya Ṭāvali, (3) Munnur Ṭāvali, (4) Chāliyūr Ṭāvali, and (5) Palliviruṭṭi Ṭāvali.[65] The royal phratry now consists of over a hundred houses forming a royal suburb of Cochin called Tripunnithera.[66]

Irawati Karve demonstrates the rule of succession from a royal ṭaṙavād consisting of four ṭāvalis:

A man is succeeded by another who is chronologically the next to him. The successor may belong to any of the four *thavazhies*. Thus all the living males of a *thārwad* form a common pool from which each time the seniormost living male succeeds to the Maharajaship. We find that up to 1863 Maharaja I ruled. He was succeeded by Maharaja II who was the son of sister No. 2 of Maharaja No. I. Maharaja III was the brother of Maharaja II. Maharaja IV was the son of an aunt (mother's sister) of the Maharaja III. Maharaja V was the son of a parallel cousin of Maharaja IV and was thus a 'nephew'. Maharaja VI was a son of Maharaja V's great aunt and was a 'maternal uncle' of Maharaja V. Maharajas VII and VIII were the nephews (parallel cousins' sons of Maharaja VII and brothers of Maharaja V). Maharaja IX was a parallel cousin of Maharaja VIII. Maharaja X was a son of a parallel cousin and he is the present Maharaja and the present heir apparent or Yuvaraja is a maternal uncle of the present Maharaja. . . .[67]

The succession to the posts of senior (mūṭṭa) queen and junior (Elaya) queen is also dependent on the rule of seniority and not on the relationship to the reigning monarch:

While the Maharaja I was ruling, his mother, Senior Rani 1, was the Senior Rani for some time. The Junior Rani who was his eldest sister died in 1879, during the Senior Raniship of the mother. After the death of the Senior Rani, the remaining daughters became Senior Ranis one after the other. The Senior Rani No. 2 was Senior Rani during part of the regime of Maharaja II and Maharaja III who were her sons. Senior Rani No. 3 was Senior Rani, while her sister's son was Maharaja III. Thus, Maharaja I had his mother as Senior Rani, Maharaja II had the grandmother and mother as Senior Ranis one after the other, Maharaja IV, who abdicated in 1911, had as Senior Ranis: His mother (3), then his aunt (4), and his two cousins (5) and (6).[68]

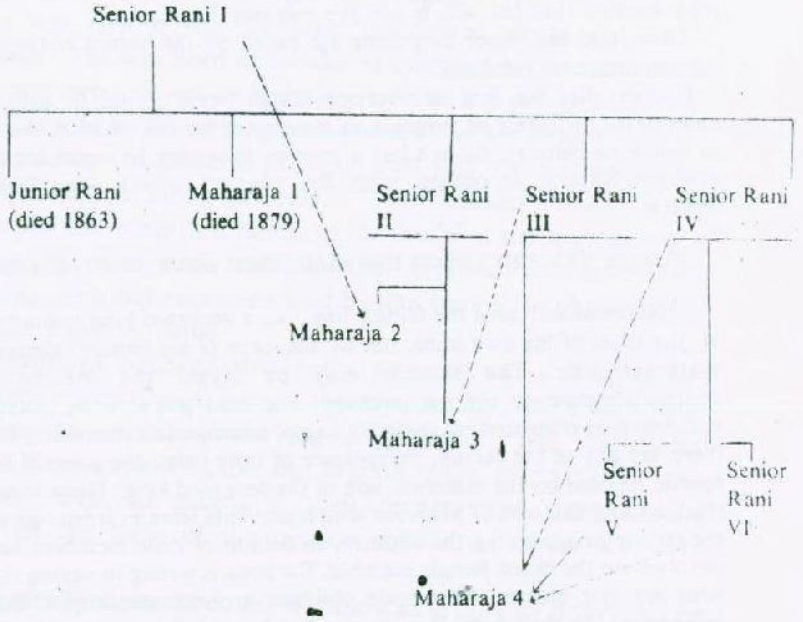
This peculiar relationship in the matrilineal rule of succession will appear in Diagram 8.

(Note: The non-dotted line represents the maternal relationship, while the dotted line shows senior raniship during the tenure of the reigning maharaja pointed by the arrow.)

In a patriarchal kingship senior rani is the mother (rāja-mātā) of the reigning king, while junior rani is his chief queen (mahiṣi). In a matrilinear kingship a senior rani may or may not be the mother of the reigning king, and a junior rani is his blood relation, while his wife, being the member of a non-royal tāravād, remains virtually unknown to his subjects.

But, a scholar of the eminance of A.L. Basham asserts that matrilinear system developed in Kerala after the twelfth century.[69] Though matriarchal rule of royal succession was succeeded by matrilineal rule of succession in the form as stated by Basham, i.e., the

DIAGRAM 8



heir to the throne was the son of the king's eldest sister; nonetheless, it later evolved in the form as explained above. Basham's second formulation, that the matrilineal rule of royal succession and inheritance of property did not exist in ancient Kerala before the twelfth century, needs closer examination.

The most essential pre-condition of matrilineality is communal ownership in land; but, communal ownership in land does not engender matrilineality when a people pass from the pastoral stage to the agricultural stage. In this sequence of social evolution, a people pass from communal property in cattle to communal property in cattle and land both, handed down in patrilineal succession and inheritance. Division of property commenced with the pastoral wealth, cattle. Taittiriya Saṁhitā (III.1.9.4-6) relates that Nābhānediṣṭha was deprived of his *share* when Manu distributed his property among his sons. Manu bade him make good his share by officiating as a priest at the sacrificial session of the Aṅgirases and obtain cattle.[70] It should be noted that *share* here should be taken to mean right of 'possession' and not right of 'ownership', the significance of which will be explained in the concluding chapter. It suffices here to say that

division of property in cattle does not mean the advent of private or individual property in cattle. It only means that the cattle belonging to the pravara (patriarchal phratry) of Manu were divided among his descendants who came to head their own gotras or patriarchal clans.

There was no land tax in Kerala before its conquest by the British.[71] Originally, all land belonged to the temples, or in other words, was communally owned through the tribal god or goddess.[72] Grāma-kṣetram in Malayali means both a temple and its land.[73] As a tribal mother posthumously becomes the mother goddess of that tribe, so also the land of that tribe comes to belong to that goddess. The Atharva-vedic hymn to the earth goddess chants in its Rk XII.1.62 as follows:

> Let standers upon thee, free from disease, free from *Yakṣma*, be produced (prasūta) for us, O Earth; awakening to meet our long lifetime, may we be tribute-bearers (bali-hṛtaḥ) to thee.[74]

Bali here is but the synonym of share. The share (bhāga) which the tribal mother or rāṣṭri appropriated for herself, became, after her decease and deification, the bali offered to her by her tribe. Brahma-deya grantees like the Brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa of Campā in the Aṅga country told their respective clan members that as Buddha had camped in their respective gāmak-khetta (communal fields), custom demanded that he be treated as their guest.[75] Most conclusive evidence is furnished by the Khattiya oligarchic saṅgha-gaṇas. The dying Buddha bade Ānanda inform the Mallas of Kusināra that the great decease was taking place in their gāmak-khetta.[76]

We come across the earliest reference to Kerala and its social system in Mahābhārata. Karna denounced the following countries in his bitter dispute with king Śalya of the Madras of the Vāhika country (VIII.44.43, 45.28):

> The irreligious Kāraskaras, Māhiṣakas, Kuraṇḍas, Keralas, Karkoṭakas and Vīrakas should be shunned.
>
> The Easterners are Dāsa slaves, Southerners are Śūdra slaves, Vāhikas are brigands and Surāṣṭras are bastards.

The real reason of this denunciation by the fiercely patriarchal Karna was that these countries were matrilineal (VIII.45.13): 'That is why not their own sons, but the sons of their sisters become their heirs.'

South India steps into recorded history in the fourth century B.C.:

> ...Pliny reports from Megasthenes that the 'Pandae' alone among Indian nations were ruled by women. Though this statement is clearly inapplicable strictly to the Pāṇḍyas of Madura, it is undoubtedly applicable to the particular social usage of Malabar, where inheritance is always traced through the female members of the family.[77]

After this follows the Sangam period which comes to a close in the second century A.D. Nilakanta Sastri thinks that in this period all South Indian countries had a kula-saṅgha form of government:

> ...The Chera kingdom must have been a sort of family estate in which all the grown-up males had a share and interest – what Kautilya calls a *kula-saṅgha*, a family group, and considers a very efficient form of state organisation. A similar clan-rule might also have prevailed in the Chola and Pāṇḍya kingdoms in this period....[78]

From the third to the sixth centuries A.D. South India is enveloped, in the words of Nilakanta Sastri, in a 'dark age' (Kali-arasar). But his characterisation is not borne out by the description of it he himself gives:

> This dark period marked by the ascendancy of Buddhism, and probably also of Jainism, was characterised also by great literary activity in Tamil. Most of the works grouped under the head 'The Eighteen Minor Works' were written during this period as also the Śilappadikāram, Maṇimēkalai and other works. Many of the authors were the votaries of the heretic sects.[79]

The author of the epic *Silappadikaram* is Iḷanko-Aṭikal. He gave up his claim to the throne of Chera in favour of his brother Senguṭ-ṭuvāṉ (A.D. 90-125) and turned a Jaina monk.[80] Aṭikal is a royal epithet. The kings of Travancore styled themselves Venāṭṭaṭikal Ti-ruv-aṭikal.[81] Padmanabh Menon renders iḷanko as monk.[82] The queen of Senguṭṭuvaṉ was called Iḷanko Venmal.[83] It clearly denotes that the queen also was a priestess. Kanakasabhai says specifically in his *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago* (pp. 66-67, 132) that the kings and warriors of ancient South preferred to commit ritual suicide or get themselves ritually slaughtered in order to avoid natural death due to old age or disease. It clearly shows that the kings of the Sangam period were temporary consorts of the priestess queens, the significance of which will be explained in the later chapters. The epic concludes with the establishment of the cult of the mother goddess Kannaki by Senguttuvāṉ at the request of the poet Śāttaṉār, author of a sister epic called *Maṇimēkalai*. The mountain girls of Kerala, before whom the still mortal Kannaki appeared, sang and danced to her as follows:

Let's sing the praise of the virtuous girl
Whose torn-off breast could burn Madurai down.
Heaven and earth are shaken by her will.
The gods themselves came down to seek her man.
Sing! Dance! Lucky friend, sing!
Sing! Dance! Lucky friend, sing!
And when we sing the praises of the girl
Who brought Madurai low, we'll ask a favour:
"Grant us a lawful husband
The prince of our mountains."
Virtuous women, come to worship
The lovely Kannaki, with pubis like
a Cobra's hood – she who once stood
Smiling amidst our fertile fields.[84]

She was a goddess of fertility, and though born in Puhar, the capital of the Chola kingdom, and lost her husband in Madurai, the Pandya capital, she chose for her, 'great decease' and deification, the Chera or Kerala kingdom, the classic land of mother right.

Tradition divides the ancient history of Kerala into two periods – (1) the rule of the Brahmans, and (2) the rule of the Perumāls. The Perumāls ruled Kerala from A.D. 216 to A.D. 825,[85] i.e., long before the twelfth century, the date line before which patriarchy is said to have held sway in Kerala. Padmanabh Menon, on the basis of epigraphical evidence, explodes the myth according to which it was the last Perumāl, who divided the hithertofore one Kerala into four kingdoms. During the period of the Perumāls the following five kingdoms existed: (1) Travancore or Vēṇāṭu, (2) The Zamorin or Ēṟṇāṭu, (3) Kāyamkulam or Ōṭaṇāṭu, (4) Āraṅgōṭṭu or Veḷḷuvanād, and (5) Neḍumpaṟayūr or Pālakkāṭu.[86]

Travancore was always ruled by the eldest son of the queen of Āṯṯingal.[87] The most remarkable thing is that Travancore was ruled by no king in the real sense of the term, for the ruler was but the deputy of the queen of Āṯṯingal:

> We learn from Forbes who arrived at Angengo in February 1722, ... 'There was still a nominal Queen of Āṯṯinga when I resided at Angengo; who, like the Raja soverign of the Mahrattas, was little more than a state prisoner, while the King of Travancore, the usurper of her dominions, imitating the Peshwas of Poona, styled himself Diwan or minister to the Queen of Āṯṯinga.' From this it becomes evident that the Rāṇis could not have resigned their rights of sovereignty absolutely to Raja Mārṯṯāṇḍa Varma as observed by Hamilton, for we find Mārṯṯāṇḍa Varma's successor, the Raja Rāma Varma, styling himself as Diwan, or minister of the Queen of Āṯṯingal, thirteen years after the death of King Mārṯṯāṇḍa Varma. At present, the female members of the Travancore Royal House are known as the Rāṇis of Āṯṯingal, and the village and country thereabouts are still regarded as their private property. These comprise the two Adhikarams or proverthies or revenue subdivisions of Āṯṯingal and Edacode and a few gardens. These are wholly free from Government interference in matters of revenue administration.
>
> ...The Rāṇis are, no doubt, styled in English as the Senior and Junior Rāṇis of Travancore, but, in all official communications and publications in the vernacular, they are styled as Āṯṯingal Mūṯṯa Ṭampurāṭṭi and Āṯṯingal Ilaya Ṭampurāṭṭi, i.e., the Senior and Junior Rāṇis of Āṯṯingal.[88]

The ruling king of a Malayali kingdom was called Maharaja and the heir apparent Elaya Raja.[89] It is apparent that these appellations are but imitations of the appellations Mūṯṯa Ṭampurāṭṭi and Elaya Ṭampurāṭṭi. This takes us back to the matriarchal rule of succession in which the mother of the tribe and clan was succeeded by the eldest daughter as among the Khasis. Padmanabh Menon has already been quoted to say: '...There is nothing in the laws and customs of Malabar which prevents females from succeeding to the throne or governing the country....'[90] Hence, it seems that at least Travancore in Kerala was originally governed by women. The coronation of the kings of Travancore was not considered complete if they did not fulfil the following peculiar custom:

> ...The Royal House of Āṯṯingal is at present held in such great estimation that each Travancore sovereign has to visit the place, soon after his coronation, to complete the ceremonies in connection therewith, and he is expected to renew that visit every year of his reign for the ceremony known as Ari Ittu Valcha (Ari Iṯṯu Vālcha) in the month of Makaram (January-February).[91]

This custom denotes that the original seat of royalty of Travancore was the country of Āṯṯingal. Āṯṯingal, before it became a revenue subdivision of the kingdom of Travancore, was a separate kingdom and was ruled by females.[92] Āṯṯingal was formerly inhabited by the Kūpaka people and in ancient times the queen of Āṯṯingal was called the queen of the Kūpakas.[93] According to the ancient tradition as recorded by Kēralōṯpaṯṯi, Malanād, or Malabar, meaning hill country, was originally divided into four parts of which Kūpa or Kūva or Kūvala was one. They are given in the following order: (1) Ṭulu, (2) Kūpa, (3) Kerala, and (4) Mūṣaka. Ṭulu is equivalent to the present North and South Canaras, a part of the Karnataka state; Kūpa is today's North Malabar; Kerala coincides with South Malabar; Mūṣaka is the South Travancore of today.[94] It means that the ancient tribe

of the Chera or Kerala people consisted of these four phratries. This agrees with the account of the Brahman government said to have been conferred on the Malayalis by Paraśurāma. According to it, four councils (kalakams or Ṭalies) administrated the four parts of Kerala. Each Kalakam was elected by sixteen clan councils called Grāmams.[95] These kalakams were situated at (1) Perinchellūr, (2) Payyannūr, (3) Parappūr, and (4) Chenganyūr, and each of these kalakams had a temple of fame in Ṭiru-vanchik-kulam, the capital of ancient Kerala.[96] In the Brahman period after every three years,[97] and in the Perumāl period after every twelve years, the whole of the Kerala tribe assembled at Ṭirunāvāye on the banks of the river Ponnani to decide matters of national importance and to elect a new Rakṣhā Puruṣhan or protector.[98] The meetings of the clan, phratry and tribe were called kūttams.[99]

Kūpakas were a phratry of such a tribe. Now who were these Kūpakas? Though the word kūpa is usually taken in the sense of a well, it also means, according to Amara-koṣa (486), a ditch excavated in a dried-up river-bed. It has already been shown that a well and a river were worshipped as āsarās or apsaras by newly-delivered women in Maharashtra. Serpent cult is the most widespread one in Kerala and that is why every Nayar ṭaravād dwelling premises invariably contained a serpent grove in its south-western corner.[100] According to folk tradition, the divine serpents dwell in wells, ponds, and rivers. The cobra princess Ulūpi fell in love with Arjuna, and dragged him down to the serpent world when he was taking bath in the river Ganges (I.213). No ṭaravād house was without its own water tank which was fed by a well.[101] Every village has its pagoda tank and expulsion from the village community meant also interdiction on that person from taking bath in this tank.[102] Next to river valleys, agriculture arose in dry lake-beds or on lands surrounding suitable lakes. The progenitors of the Śākya tribe brought under cultivation the land surrounding a lake.[103] Jayaddisa Jātaka tells us that king Jayāddisa of the Uttara Pañcālas settled one thousand clans on the cultivable soil surrounding a lake and the town came to be called Culla-kammāsa-dammanigama.[104] The author has personal knowledge of some places in Dhule district of Maharashtra where till recent times dry lake-bed cultivation was carried on. It is called Kole cultivation in Kerala.[105]

The soil must have been partitioned in the same manner as the rāṣṭra land was partitioned. Dicing, as already mentioned, was not unknown to Kerala. In mediaeval times the rice bowl 'devaswam' lands

of Kuttanad were managed by an oligarchy of Nambudri Brahmins who used to beguile their idle hours by playing with dice.[106] Dice was also one of the most favourite games of women in Sangam age.

Cultivation of rice was the most honourable occupation in ancient and mediaeval Kerala, and the most usual way of cultivating it was not dissimilar to that of the Indus civilisation.[107] Their tools were as primitive as those used by the cultivators of the Indus civilisation '...Their plough is a very simple machine, and a branchy bough serves for a harrow.'[108] Hence, the procedure of partitioning river bank lands must have been not different from that followed in dry lake-bed lands. Kūpakas thus were those who cultivated Kūpa or Kole lands, and partitioned their lands every year as the rāṣṭra land of the Indus civilisation was apportioned. As the Kūpakas were ruled by women, they were a matriarchal phratry of the Kerala tribe.

The kingdoms of Kariṅāpilli, Kārṭṭikapilli, Kāyamkulam and Pāṇapalli belonged originally to the four daughters of the queen of Attinal.[109] It is the same Kārṭṭikapilli in which 'man assumed the right of dishonouring any woman'. Elayaḍa Swarūpam was governed by a branch of Āṭṭingal.[110] Same is the case with Quilon.[111] Quilon was originally called Jayasiṃhanād, after Jayasimhan. It was one of the naḍs of Vēṇat or Travancore.[112] It has already been shown that Travancore was ruled by the son of the eldest daughter of the queen of Āṭṭingal. Hence, Quilon or Jayasiṃhanād must have been originally a naḍ of Āṭṭingal or Kūpaka itself. This Jayasimha married the queen of the Kūpakas and the son born to them by name Ravi Varma Kulasekhara Perumāl ruled over the whole of Kerala.[113] Padmanabh Menon thinks that either the eldest or the most competent of the collatoral branches of Travancore (read Āṭṭingal) ruled as a Kulaśēkhara Perumāl.[114]

Kerala Mahātmyam records an ancient tradition to the effect that Kerala originally was 'under the rule of the united Travancore and Kōlaṭṭiri dynasties'.[115] The capital of ancient Kerala was Ṭiru-vanchikkulam, the remains of which have been identified in Ṭirukkārūṛ, a deserted village in North Travancore.[116] It was also the capital of the Perumāls who ruled Kerala in A.D. 216-825. The great pagoda at Ṭiruvanchikkulam contains two stone statues of great antiquity, supposed to be of Perumāl and his wife Cherōṭṭi Amma.[117] Chēr means earth.[118] Hence, Cherōṭṭi Amma means earth mother. Only the queen of the Kūpakas could be the human representative of Cherōṭṭi Amma. In the Brahman period she took a three-yearly consort in the person of

a Rakṣhā Puruṣhan, and in the Perumāl period she took a twelve-yearly consort. The reigning queen of Āttingal was called Mūṭṭa Tampu-rāṭṭi.[119] Rāṭṭi is evidently a synonym of rāt or rāṣṭrī. Hence, the queen of the Kūpaka phratry was the rāṣṭrī of the ancient matriarchal Kerala.

Earth mother is called Bhaga-vatī in Kerala. One of the names of the mother goddess Durgā is Bhaga-vatī. The Ṛg-vedic hymn I.164 is said to be a philosophical hymn. Its Ṛk 32 invokes Nirṛti and Nirukta (II.8) specifically says that Nirṛti here means earth mother. In the Ṛk 40 of the same hymn cow is addressed as bhagavatī. Bhaga means womb or share. One who apportioned the communal wealth of the tribe must have been originally called bhaga-vatī. According to Nighaṇṭu (I.1.1) one of the synonyms of earth is gauḥ, meaning cow. Mahābhārata (II.79.19; VIII.83.20, 43-44) tells us that while the Pāṇḍavas were on their way to serve their term of banishment, Duḥśāsana danced in front of them derisively shouting 'gauḥ, gauḥ!' The epithet was directed towards Draupadī. Why? Yudhiṣṭhirā summed up the great conflict of Mahābhārata as follows (III.86.10-13):

> (This Karṇa) is a veritable world-destroying fire sent by death itself. It is fed by the might of weaponry, its thunder is the clashing of palms, the dust (raised by the melee) is its smoke, and the missiles are its motion. Fanned by the wind in the form of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, I have no doubt that it will burn up my army like grass!
>
> But this Arjuna, a cloud incarnate itself, swept by the wind that is Draupadī, hurling forth lightnings of glorious missiles, adorned with cranes in the form of white horses, evoking awe by its rain-bow called Gāṇḍiva, will surely quench in the war that raging fire called Karṇa by the torrential rain of arrows!

The fight thus seems to have taken place between the patriarchal Kuru tribe and the matriarchal Pāṇḍava tribe. The real identity of Draupadī confirms this conjecture. Draupadī was not only the common wife of the Pāṇḍavas, but also the devī (II.70.1; II.71.7) of the latter tribe. She told Satyabhāmā, the favourite wife of Kṛṣṇa, that while the Pāṇḍavas devoted the whole of their time to physical exercise and practice at arms, it was she who had to manage the economic and administrative affairs of the kingdom at Indra-prastha (III.233.50-56):

> When Yudhisthira was dwelling in Indraprastha he had horses and elephants to the number of one lakh each. Ruling the earth he had all this, and at that time I used to tell the persons (in charge of these horses and elephants) what they were to do and hear how they had accomplished the tasks assigned them.
>
> In the same manner, I knew everything about the work done or left undone by the women and servants in the women's quarter (of the palace), as well as by the cowherds and shepherds.
>
> It was only I, O auspicious and accomplished one, that (had the privilege to) know the revenue of the king and the income and expenditure of the Pāṇḍavas.
>
> Assigning me the whole responsibility of the clan, O of beautiful face, the bulls of the Bharatas spent their whole time in practising at arms.

Draupadī thus was the rāṣṭrī of the Pāṇḍava tribe. How can it be squared with their patrilineal descent, the term Pāṇḍava meaning the sons of Pāṇḍu? The mother goddess of the Pāṇḍavas was Durgā; for it is she whom Yudhiṣṭhira invoked for aid when the Pāṇḍavas were on the point of entering the capital of the Matsyas, Virāṭa-nagarī (IV.6), to pass their one year of incognito-living. Durgā was addressed by Yudhiṣṭhira in his invocation as the sister of Kṛṣṇa (IV.6.4). Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, was the paternal aunt of Kṛṣṇa. The epithet of Draupadī, Kṛṣṇā, itself suggests that she was the human representative of Kālī Durgā, and in that role she stood in the relation of sister of Kṛṣṇa.

Durgā was invoked by Yudhiṣṭhira by the epithets 'Mahiṣa-asura-nāśinī', the destroyer of the Asura Mahiṣa (buffalo), and 'Vindhya-vāsinī', one who dwells on the mount Vindhya (IV.6.15, 17). These epithets denote that her place of origin must have been South India. This is corroborated by the account of her cult given by Kanakasabhai from the Tamil epic *Silappadikaram:*

> The aboriginal Villavar and Minavar appear to have had no gods. The Nagas who first conquered the aboriginal races, which inhabited the Tamil country, worshipped the dread goddess Kali and sacrificed many a buffalo at her shrines. The image of Kali was decked in a most frightful manner. Her matted hair was tied up like a crown on her head, with the shining skin of a young cobra. The curved tusk of a boar was fastened in her hair to resemble the crescent. A string of tiger's teeth served as a necklace on her shoulders. The striped skin of a tiger was wound round her waist like a garment. A strong bow bent and ready to shoot was placed in her hand; and she was mounted on a tall stag with branching antlers. Drums rattled and pipes squeaked in front of her image, while fierce Nagas slaughtered buffaloes at her altar. As the victims bled the priestess got up in a frenzy, shivering and dancing wildly, possessed with the spirit of Kali, and shouted 'The cattle stalls in the villages around us are full of oxen, but the yards of the Eyinar's cottages are empty. Mild like the peaceful villagers are the Eyinar who should live by robbery and plunder. If you do not offer the sacrifice due to the

goddess, who rides the stag, she would not bless your bows with victory!' Kali being a female deity, her votaries offered to her balls, dolls, parrots, wild fowls and peacocks with which Tamil women used to amuse themselves. Perfumes, pastes and powders, fragrant sandal, boiled beans and grains, and oblations of rice mixed with blood and flesh were likewise presented at her shrines. . . . Kali was also called Aiyai in Tamil, and was believed to be the youngest of seven sisters*. . . . So much was the ferocious goddess dreaded by the people, that it is related that on one occasion when the doors of her temple of Madura remained closed, and could not be opened, the Pandyan king, believing it to be a token of her displeasure, fell prostrate before her shrine, praying for her mercy, and to appease the wrath of the goddess, granted the revenue of two fertile villages, for the expenses of her worship.[120]

Basing himself on the accounts of Megasthenes and Pliny and the Tamil epics, Kanakasabhai states that the Pandyan dynasty was descended from a woman called Paṇḍaiā:

. . .Ancient Tamil poems seem to support this (Greek) tradition because they refer to a women as the founder of the Pandyan dynasty. She appears to have been subsequently worshipped as a goddess in Madura. In the Chilapp-athikaram she is spoken of as Mathurapathi or 'Queen of Madura' and she is described as dressed half in the attire of a warrior and half in that of a princess. The Manimekalai also alludes to her as Mathurapathi. . . . The later traditionary accounts speak of this princess as a woman born with three breasts. . . .[121]

The fierce patriarchy of the Kauravas and the dogged adherance to the matriarchal orthodoxy by the Pāṇḍavas could not have evolved within a single generation, and that too with persons who were related to each other as first cousins. It may be inferred from this that the Pāṇḍavas were a matriarchal or matrilineal tribe of middle or South India who clashed repeatedly with the patriarchal Kaurava tribe, with whom they were in no way related at all. The epithet 'Tāpatya' with which Citraratha addressed Arjuna also meant the descendant of the river goddess Tapti. Mother goddess Durgā is also called Nairṛtī, the daughter of Nirṛti. According to Rāmāyaṇa, the original abode of the Nairṛtas, the Rākṣasa sons of Nirṛti, was Laṅkā (VII.3.33), and the mother goddess Laṅkā was called 'Śāla-kaṭaṅkaṭa', the mother goddess of the sacred grove of teak trees (VII.4.23, 8.13). Riparian agriculture seems to have been in vogue on South Indian rivers since quite ancient times. For, ancient tradition mentions that king Karikal (A.D. 100) of Chola built embankments along both sides of the river

*This evidently refers to the seven mothers.

Kaveri which used to overflow its banks and inundate regions lying on both sides of her banks.[122]

But, Mahābhārata (I.94.34-48) tells us that Saṁvaraṇa, after being defeated by the Pāñcālas, fled with his tribe to somewhere on the banks of the Indus. It is more probable that he took refuge in the Tapti valley, famous in those days for its matriarchal or matrilineal civilisation, and thus he came to marry Tapatī, the high priestess of the river goddess. But, it should be noted that the Pāṇḍavas had to be reminded by Citraratha that they were Tāpatyas. Matriarchy and matrilineality had become with them also a thing of the past, for they themselves were the field-born sons of Pāṇḍu. Then how is it that they came to adher to matriarchal customs? After having saved themselves from the 'house of combustibles' and fleeing from the murderous ire of the Kauravas, they took refuge in the tribal kingdom of the Rākṣasas, first in that of Hidimbā and then in that of Baka-asura, which were matriarchal or matrilineal. Hence, they had to adopt matriarchal customs, and after this metamorphosis they married the matriarch Draupadī. This mighty matrimonial alliance forced the Kauravas to yield to them half of the Kuru kingdom which was a wilderness. The Pāṇḍavas settled on it as a matriarchal tribe headed by Draupadī. As a descendant of the royal clan of the Pāñcālas Draupadī also was called Pārṣatī, which is one of the epithets of Durgā. It is thus that Durgā became the mother goddess of the Pāṇḍavas.

Collating all these facts together it can be surmised that the Pāṇḍava tribe must have been a remnant of the great matriarchal riparian agricultural civilisation of India.

The celebrated story of Sāvitrī, related by Mahābhārata (III.293-299), also needs a more careful examination. Sāvitrī was the only offspring of king Aśva-pati of the Madras by his queen Mālavī (belonging to Mālava or Malla tribe). She was born of a boon conferred on the king by the mother goddess Sūryā Sāvitrī, and hence she was named Sāvitrī. When she came of age, she herself selected Satyavān, the only son of the blind and hence banished king of the Śālvas by name Dyumatsena and his wife Śaibyā (belonging to the Śibi tribe). Satyavān was fated to die exactly a year after his marriage. Sāvitrī won over the king of the dead, Yama, by her sagacity and shrewdness to grant her five boons, the last of which restored the dead Satyavān to long life. Granting her the third and fourth boons, Yama said (III.297.58-60):

Satyavān will produce on you a hundred sons. All of them will become Kṣ-

atriya kings blessed with children and grandchildren. *They will be known by your name for all times to come.*

Your father will have a hundred sons by your mother Mālavī. Your brothers will grow up to be godlike Kṣatriyas gifted with sons and grandsons. *They will be known for ever as Mālavas.*

Thus, it becomes clear beyond doubt that the tribe of the Madras, Śālvas, Mālavas or Mallas, Śibis, and Sāvitri-putras were, within memory of Mahābhārata, matriarchal. The extant recension being heavily modified in favour of patriarchy by the priestly clan of Bhṛgus, matrilochal marriage was arbitrarily changed into patrilochal marriage. In a patrilochal marriage, the progeny of the Mādra Aśvapati would never have come to be known after his Mālavī queen, neither the offsprings of the Śālva Satyavān could ever have been known as Savitrī-putras. The very logic of the matrilineality of these tribes leads us to the conclusion that the Mādra Aśvapati must have gone to live with the rāṣṭrī Mālavī, while the Mālavī Sāvitri became the devī of a new matriarchal tribe by consorting with the Śālva Satyavān who must have gone to live with her.

With this we again return to rāṣṭrī Vāk, the first woman who came to be known by that appellation, though she was not the first woman to be known by the function underlying that appellation. Atharva-veda (XV.30) and Ṛg-veda (X.125) contain a most remarkable hymn dedicated to her. The Atharva-vedic hymn is significantly entitled 'Rāṣṭri-Devī'. A free translation of the most important Ṛks is given below:

I dally with the Rudras, the Vasus, Ādityas and Viśvedevas; I bear the twains Mitra and Varuṇa, Indra and Agni, and the twin Aśvins.

I am rāṣṭrī, gatherer of treasures, the first that has understood the matters of sacrifice; me here (in the form of communal land) the gods apportioned among themselves, me of many stations enter into many.

I my own self say this, (which is) enjoyable of gods and of men; whomsoever I love, him I make formidable, him Brahman, him seer, him very wise.

Through me alone they eat food, and through me they breathe and hear. Knowing me not thus they perish. Give heed to these sanctified words of mine.

I stretch the bow for Rudra, for his shaft to slay the brahman-hater; I assemble a phratry for taking common meals;* into heaven and earth have I entered.

*'Samadam' is usually taken to mean strife or war. But the other meaning given by Nirukta (IX.17) is more appropriate – 'Samadaḥ (battle)-sam-adaḥ (i.e., eating together) from (the root) ad (to eat)....'[123] Atharva-vedic hymn III.30.6 calls for common meals. Vinaya-pitaka mentions 'gaṇa-bhojana'[124] and ñāti meals.[125]

I bear the dying Soma, I Tvaṣṭṛ, also Pūṣan and Bhaga; I assign wealth to the giver of oblations, to the very zealous (?), the sacrificer, the presser of Soma.

Nirukta (VIII.2) informs us that Vāk was the daughter of Ambhṛṇa. It is ridiculous to affix a patronymic to the rāṣṭrī transformed into a mother goddess. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad's list of the teachers of the Vājasaneyi school is topped by the following names:

Kaśyapa Naidhṛvi from Vāc (Speech),
Vāc from Ambhiṇī,
Ambhiṇī from Āditya (the Sun).[126]

In Artha-śāstra (I.12) we come across a school of state-craft under the appellation of Āmbhīya.[127] Fourth century B.C. yields more information on this solitary name:

The region to the west of the Indus has been the twentieth satrapy of the Persian Empire since its conquest by Darius I about 518 B.C. It seems to have been the most profitable of Achaemenid provinces. According to Herodotus, the annual tribute in gold dust was 300 talents, say close to nine tons – an astounding treasure washed out of the river sands on the upper Indus and place – mined on the highlands of Tibet or Kashmir. The wool and superior woollen cloth of the satrapy and its adjoining regions were famous even in India.... The principal trade city of the province was Pushkarāvati, modern Charsadda, Peukelaotis to the Greeks. The name means 'with the artificial lotus-pond', the *pushkara* which we have traced in the Indus culture. The one known coin of this city, of the Indo-Greek times and fabric, preserves ancient memory by showing a magnificent Indian humped bull on one side, while the mother goddess Ambi of Pushkarāvati appears on the obverse bearing a lotus in her hand....[128]

Ambi means mother. On the east of Sindhu lay the kingdom of the Ambhis, whose capital was Takṣaśila. Their king Ambhi surrendered to Alexander.[129] We can deduce from the tad-rāja suffix rules (IV.1.168-173) of Pāṇini, that Ambhi was the name of a jana-pada (country) and the Kṣatriya tribe living in it, while the offspring and king of that tribe were called Āmbhi. Some of the names of the wives of the gods given by Ṛk V.46.8 are of immediate interest – Indrāṇi, wife of Indra, and Varuṇāni, wife of Varuṇa. Amarakoṣa (73-74) gives Bhavāni (masc. Bhava), Rudrāṇi (masc. Rudra), Śarvāṇi, and Mṛdāni as some of the names of the mother goddess Pārvati. Atharva-vedic hymn IV.37.3 contains the name of an apsaras called Pramandani, also pronounced Pramandini. Nirukta (IV.32), commenting on Ṛk III.53.14, states that Magandas were a non-Aryan

people and Pra-maganda was their king. It is evident that the apsaras Pramandinī must have been originally the mother goddess of these people. Hence, we can safely conclude that Vāk Ambhiṇī was the mother goddess of the Ambhi tribe, which, from the humped bull on the coin of Puṣkarāvati, was the direct remnant of the great Indus civilisation.

References

1. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in Indian Theory of Government*, p. 16.
2. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 109.
3. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *op. cit.*, p. 18.
4. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, pp. 109-111; *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, I.8.16; *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, X.26.
5. Whitney, W.B., *Atharva-Veda Saṁhitā*, p. 626.
6. Kunte, M.M. *The Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilisation*, p. 78.
7. Frazer, J.G., *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, Vol. I, p. 115.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
10. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Marathi trans.), pp. 145-146.
11. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 434.
12. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 62.
13. Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Pāṇini*, p. 66.
14. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 66.
15. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 178.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
20. Puri, B.N. *India in the Time of Patañjali*, pp. 73-74.
21. *Mahābhārata*, I.75.18-25; Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, pp. 42-81.
22. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, pp. 65-66; Nilkanta Sastri, K.A., *A History of South India*, pp. 81-82.
23. Oza, G., *Rāja-putāne kā Itihāsa* (Hindi), Vol. I., p. 34.
24. *Mrcchakaṭika*, Act VI.
25. Gurdon, P.R.T., *The Khasis*, p. 70.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
27. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 416.
28. Gurdon, P.R.T., *op. cit.*, p. 21.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 87-88.
30. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 416.
31. Gurdon, P.R.T., *op. cit.*, p. 82.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. xix-xx.

33. Hitty, P.K., *History of the Arabs*, p. 87.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
37. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. I, pp. 373-374.
38. Hitty, P.K., *op. cit.*, p. 28.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
40. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 370-372.
41. Hitty, P.K., *op. cit.*, p. 26.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
45. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 714-715.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.
47. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-294.
48. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, p. 381.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 379-381.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 387, Vol. II, pp. 515-516.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Frazer, J.G., *Adonis Attis Osiris*, Vol. II, pp. 6-8.
54. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 378.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 416.
56. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 50.
57. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1-2.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
59. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 302-303, 366.
60. Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, p. 45.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
62. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 366.
64. Ehrenfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, p. 61.
65. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 480-481.
66. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 366-367.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 368.
69. Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that Was India*, p. 93.
70. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, V.14.
71. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 344-349.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 295-296, 299-302; Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 48, 49; Robertson Smith, W., *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 95-96.
73. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, p. 329; Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *op. cit.*, p. 49.
74. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-Veda Saṁhitā*, p. 672.
75. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlak-kandha-vagga*, IV.1.5, V.I.10.
76. *Ibid.*, *Mahā-vagga*, III.23.83; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, p. 102.
77. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 65-66; Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 138-140.

80. "Silappadikaram", trans. Danielou, A., *Illustrated Weekly*, 7-2-1965.
81. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 425-426.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.
83. 'Silappadikaram', *op. cit.*, 3-1-1965.
84. *Ibid.*
85. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 431-432.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 424, 426-427.
87. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 28-29.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
89. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 411.
90. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 2-3.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
92. *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 336-337.
93. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 11.
94. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 42.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 309-310, Vol. II, pp. 374-376.
96. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 309-310; Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.
97. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 374-376.
98. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 38, 250-252; Vol. II, pp. 374-376.
99. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 250-252.
100. Ehrenfels, O.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 66.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
102. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 260-261.
103. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, III.4.4.14.
104. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, p. 124.
105. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 97.
106. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.
107. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 87.
108. *Ibid.*
109. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 83-84.
110. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
113. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 32.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
115. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 426-428.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
117. *Ibid.*, pp. 465-466.
118. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 272-273.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
120. Kanakasabhai, V., *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, pp. 227-228.
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55.
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
123. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 144.
124. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Cullavagga-pāli*, VII.9.14.
125. *Ibid.*, *Pācittiya-pāli*, V.29.195.
126. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 175.

127. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, pp. 120-121.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 134; also plate 57 in the book.
129. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

7

Marriage

Rāṣṭri Vāk of the Āmbhīs declared – 'Whomsoever I love, him I make...Brahman....'

This seems to be a case of sacred marriage. It has already been demonstrated that the first 'dharma' of mankind was ritual promiscuous copulation. It is out of this 'ritual' that marriage as we know now has developed, though many in India and other countries still believe marriage in its present form to have existed from the beginning of human society. Kane, representing the orthodox view, thinks that it has been vindicated by modern sociology:

> ...Vedic works contain no indications about a society in which the relations of the sexes were promiscuous and unregulated. In the Mahābhārata, however, Pandu is made to state to his queen Kunti that women in former ages were under no control, indulged themselves as they liked and that they left off one man and went after another, that this state of things continued to his (Pandu's) day in the country of Uttara Kuru, that it was Śvetaketu, son of Uddālaka, who for the first time stopped all this licence and laid down the rule that if a woman proved false to her husband or if a husband was false to a chaste wife, very grave sin would be incurred. In the Sabhāparva (31.37-38) it is said that through the favour of Agni women in Māhiṣmati did what they liked and could not be restrained. These passages cannot be relied upon for proving promiscuity of intercourse. In the first place, the country of Uttara Kuru is more or less mythical. This passage rather gives expression to what the poet imagined about remotest ages and not what he knew was the real state of society thousands of years before him. The theory of an original state of promiscuity once advanced by several sociologists has now ceased to be respectable.[1]

Kane cites only Mrs. M. Cole's *Marriage, Past and Present* as his sole authority. We can cite a better authority than Mrs. Cole, namely, Mrs. Irawati Karve, whose *Kinship Organisation in India* is a classic in that field:

> There are, however, other references which cannot be dismissed so lightly. The earliest one is in the Rgveda. The hymn is a magical incantation uttered to drive away and destroy the demon who causes abortion in women. The demon is supposed to have intercourse with a woman, enter her womb and then destroy the embryo. In order to have easy access to the woman, this demon is supposed to take the shape of any of those who generally approach her and sleep with her, and these are enumerated as the brother, the husband and the lover.
>
> *'He who sleeps with you becoming your brother, husband or lover and who kills your progeny, him I destroy.'*
>
> This is an incantation apparently used by common people, and has no reference to gods. It must, therefore, refer to something quite customary in the society of those times.[2]

As late as law-giver Baudhāyana (B.C. 500-200), the producing classes of the Brahminic society, i.e., the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras, were unrestricted in their sexual behaviour. Prescribing the gāndharva and paiśāca forms of marriage for these toiling castes, the law-giver gives the following reason for the prescription:

> 14. For Vaiśyas and Śūdras are not particular about their wives.
> 15. Because they are allowed (to subsist by such low occupations as) husbandry and service.*[3]

Here again we come across the motive underlying sexual promiscuity. Śūdra women could be forced to satisfy the passion of their masters of the higher castes; but Vaiśyas, who were Aryans and free tillers of the soil, could not be expected to be subject to such compulsion. The real motive that underlay the sexual promiscuity of the Vaiśyas was their occupation of subsistence, namely agriculture. Ritual sexual promiscuity was believed to be essential for ensuring abundance in agricultural production.

That sexual promiscuity was practised by the producing classes for this purpose also becomes evident from the Ucchaṅga Jātaka. The husband, the son, and the brother of a peasant woman of the Kosala country were arrested on suspicion of dacoity and sentenced to death. The lamenting woman was granted by the king a boon by which she could secure the reprieve of only one of them. The king was confounded to hear her demanding the release of her brother whom she called 'of the same womb' (sodariya), a clear case of matriarchal survival. The woman explained to the perplexed king:

> A son, your majesty, is the product of my womb, while husband can be

*The text of Baudhāyana is – Ayantrita-kalatrā hi Vaiśya-Śūdrā bhavanti – which means that the womenfolk of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras are unrestricted in their (sexual) behaviour.[4]

picked up on the road; but I see no country from which I can procure a brother born of the same womb.

The king was so pleased with her answer, that he ordered the release of all the three of them.[5]

Sexual promiscuity in ancient society is not a case of 'respectability', but of historical reality. *The task of a historian is not to persist in questioning the proved authenticity of an historical phenomenon, but to investigate the cause or causes that gave rise to it.* Though Kane denies the existence of the stage of sexual promiscuity or the horde (samana or samāja) in India, he admits that Indian society had to go initially through group marriage:

...In the Dharmaśāstra works there are traces of the knowledge of the practice of polyandry. Āp.Dh.S. (II.10.27.2-4) refers to it 'one should not make over (his wife) to strangers (for a son by *niyoga*) but only to one who is a sagotra; for they declare that a bride is given to the family (of brothers and not to one brother alone)....'[6]

The word used is kula:

An expression occurs in later Smṛtis, which prescribes 'the giving of a girl to a *kula*' (kule kanyā pradāna). This is interpreted as giving a girl as a bride to many brothers or cousins, i.e., to the kula as a whole.[7]

We have already seen that kula came to mean joint family only in the closing period of slavery. The earliest law-givers, Gautama and Āpastamba, are said to have flourished between the sixth to fourth and the sixth to third centuries B.C. respectively.[8] The death-knell of slavery as a mode of production had already rung, and hence it is but natural for these earliest law-givers to equate kula with joint family instead of clan. But the Brahminical laws were applicable only to the newly-arisen feudal monarchies. India has been a land of so uneven a development that it has preserved an archaic matriarchal society such as the Khasis of Assam when the first socialist state was already on its way in another part of the world.[9] Advanced regions of India, contemporary with the earliest of Smṛtis, were broadly divided into countries ruled by kings and countries governed by tribal states: saṅgha-gaṇas. Though the law-givers legislated for the Brahminical feudal monarchies, one of the earliest of them, Āpastamba (I.1.1), admitted that all laws, i.e., the Smṛtis, originated in samayas.[10] Samaya is defined by Jayaswal as follows:

The laws of the Gaṇas are called by the law-books Samaya. Samaya,

literally, means a decision or a resolution arrived at in an assembly (from Sam + $\sqrt{i}$ = 'to come together'), that is, the laws of the Gaṇas were passed in their meetings.[11]

When king Śantanu of the Kurus took the river goddess Gaṅgā (or her priestess) as his wife, he is said to have entered into a 'samaya' with her (I.98.17). The king of the Dāśas consented to give his daughter to Śantanu only when the Kuru elders led by their prince Deva-vrata (later Bhīṣma) made a 'samaya' compact with him (I.100.53). The Pāṇḍavas, in order to strengthen the unity of their clan, decided by a 'samaya' that Draupadī should live with each of them for a year in turn (I.211.31).

As the Smṛti laws originated from the tribal samayas, the Brahminical feudal monarchies originated from samaya-making tribal states. *As the basic unit of feudal society is joint family, the basic unit of tribal society is clan.* Hence the phrase 'kule kanyā pradānam' in the context of a tribal society means giving of a bride to a clan, as Draupadī was given to the Pāṇḍava clan.

Kane rightly differentiates between two types of group marriages:

...There are two types of polyandry, one matriarchal (where a woman forms simultaneous alliances with two or more men who are not necessarily relations of each other and therefore succession is traced through the female) and the other fraternal, where a woman becomes the wife of several brothers. The former practice once prevailed among the Nairs on the Malabar coast, but it has now died out. The latter form of polyandry is still to some extent found in Kumaon, Garhwal and among peoples in the Himalayan area up to Assam. Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji (I.A.Vol. 8, p. 88) says that in Kumaun between the Tons and Jumna rivers about Kalsi, Rajputs, brāhmaṇas and śūdras all practice polyandry and the children are attributed to the eldest brother who is alive....[12]

Both polyandries are the marriage institutions of agricultural societies, and hence matriarchal polyandry naturally precedes fraternal polyandry. Fraternal polyandry is the first step made by matriarchal polyandry in the direction of patriarchy. Unless an actual extant case is examined, we shall not be able to understand correctly what is meant by fraternal polyandry. The best study available is from Tibet and Ladakh:

Mr. Savage Landor himself, who had, to his cost, exceptional opportunities of obtaining first-hand information on the subject, gives us the most definite statement in regard to that organisation. 'A Tibetan girl on marrying,' he says, 'does not enter into a nuptial with an individual, but with all his family, in the following somewhat complicated manner; if an eldest son marries an

eldest sister all the sisters of the bride become his wives. Should he, however, begin by marrying the second sister, then only the sisters from the second down will be his property. If the third, all from the third, and so on. At the same time, when the bridegroom has brothers they one and all cohabit with her as with her sisters, if she has any.' Tibetan marriage is, therefore, not simple polyandry, but is, in fact, a complete group-marriage in principle and in practice, and all the males of one group becoming united, by virtue of the marriage contract, to all the females of another, and reciprocally.[13]

Not only the brothers, but also their father and uncles were entitled to cohabit with the common wives of their sons and nephews. If a man married a widow having daughters, the daughters also became his wives. Hence, it is a clear case of all the female members of a clan marrying all the male members of another clan.[14] This system of marriage is the last remnant of varga or moiety system of sexual congress of a tribe which has displaced the horde. This system of moieties was still in evidence in the Todas of the Nilgiri hills. The two moieties of this people were called Teivaliol and Tartharol, the former meant, according to Rivers, 'god's people' and the latter 'ordinary people', while Irawati Karve thinks that they meant matrilineal and patrilineal respectively.[15] The memory of moieties is so tenacious that Kātyāyana termed śreṇi, pūga, gaṇa, vrāta, and saṅgha, words denoting phratry and tribe, as vargas.[16]

This fraternal clan marriage, though a step towards patriarchy, in which the eldest brother is the 'owner' of the communal land and property, is not patrilineal, but matrilineal:

> ...In spite of the fundamental importance of the undivided patriarchal household in the social organisation of Tibet at the present day, that patriarchal family has, by a strange paradox, no name; there are no family names in Tibet, and children are named after their mother and not after their father, whose name, indeed, must not even be mentioned....[17]

The difference between the Tibetan clan marriage and the Pāṇḍava marriage should be noted. Pāṇḍavas followed polyandry and polygyny both. As the Pāṇḍavas were polyandrous in being the common husbands of Draupadī, so also were they polygenous in each of them having several wives. Yudhiṣṭhira had for his individual wife Devikā of the Śibis, Bhīma had Balandharā of the Kāśis and also Hiḍimbā, Arjuna had Subhadrā, Ulūpī, and Citrāṅgadā, Nakula had Kareṇumatī of the Cedis, and Sahadeva had Vijayā of the Madras (I.95.76-81).

The second difference is that the paternity of the five sons of Draupadī, namely Prativindhya from Yudhiṣṭhira, Sutasoma from Bhīma, Śrutakīrti from Arjuna, Śatānika from Nakula, and Śrutakarman from Sahadeva, was distinctly known (I.95.75), and Draupadī was worried lest her sons would be run down as sons of slaves when the Pāṇḍava clan was enslaved in the game of dice with the Kauravas (II.71.28-30). *Thus, the rise of patrilineality here is clearly the result of the development of slavery in the epic society.*

The third distinguishing feature, and the most important for the present discussion, is that Draupadī, the common wife of the Pāṇḍavas, was the mahiṣī or chief queen of Yudhiṣṭhira, while their individual wives were ordinary consorts. Draupadī was patnī, meaning no sacrifice could be performed without her participation, while the individual wives of the Pāṇḍavas were just jāyās or wives who were not entitled to participate in sacrifices.[18]

In a matriarchy woman headed the clan, phratry, and tribe by the very nature of things. But, in a fraternal clan marriage between two royal clans of two different tribes, the daughter was given to the clan on the condition called 'rājya-śulkā', meaning that only the offspring of that daughter and of no other wife would be consecrated to kingship. The king of the Kekayas gave his daughter Kaikeyī to king Daśaratha of the Kosalas on this condition (II.108.3). Satyavatī was obtained from her father, the king of the Dāśas, by Bhīṣma for his father Śantanu on the same condition (I.100.56, 77). 'Rājya-śulka' was a patriarchal device for circumventing the claim to the throne of Rāma and Bhīṣma, but Draupadī herself was the devī, however circumscribed that office might have become by that time, and her devī-ship was rooted in her being the common wife of the Pāṇḍavas.

The situation will become clear only when we examine the early Vedic ritual of marriage. The marriage hymns of Atharva-veda (XIV.1-2) and Ṛg-veda (X.85) are still recited in the marriages of upper caste Hindus. The marriage hymn of Atharva-veda will be the basis of the discussion that follows because of its more archaic character. The hymn is in celebration of the divine marriage of the moon god Soma with Sūryā. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa comments – 'Prajāpati gave his daughter to Soma, the king, even Sūrya Sāvitrī; for her all the gods came as groomsmen:...'[19]

The word vara is translated as groomsman, though it also means bridegroom. That all the gods were bridegrooms, and Sūryā was married to the tribe of gods as such becomes clear from the Ṛks XIV.1.46, 61, XIV.2.1, 12, 14. Ṛk XIV.2.14 is the most significant:

> 14. (As) a soulful cultivated field hath this woman come; in her here, O

men, scatter ye seed; she shall give birth to progeny for you from her belly (*vakṣaṇas*), bearing the exuded (*dugdha*) sperm of the male (ṛṣabha).[20]

The clan-mother (kula-pā) Apālā Ātreyi, seer of the Rg-vedic hymn VIII.91, invoked Indra to fertilise her father's bald head, the communal field (urvarā) and her womb. Sūryā is equated to the communal field.

Sūryā is called 'the great naked one' (mahā-nagnī) by the Rk XIV.1.36. There are two 'naked ones', besides Sūryā, the first and the primal one being Nirṛti (Atharva-veda, V.7.8) and the second Vāk.[21] Nirṛti, Vāk, and Sūryā are the forms of earth mother. According to Rk XIV.2.71 the divine marriage is meant to bring about the fruitful union of heaven and earth:

71. He am I, she thou; chant (Sāma) am I, verse (Rk) thou; heaven I, earth though; let us (two) come together here; let us generate progeny.[22]

Why was the union of heaven and earth desired? To ward off famine. Famine meant death to primitives, the one that wiped out whole tribes, hence most dreaded. That is why Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (I.2.1) visualises the beginning of the world in death and calls it hunger:

1. In the beginning nothing whatsoever was here. This (world) was covered over with death, with hunger – for hunger is death.[23]

This death in the form of foodlessness can only be overcome by creating food, and food is created only by the discharge of the celestial rain in the womb of the 'great naked one', earth. Coomaraswamy explains:

The primary expression of the 'wrath' is in drought, the precursor of famine. Prior to the marital re-union of Sky and Earth 'There was no rain, no warmth, the Five Folk were at variance' (na samajānata, AB.IV.27); . . . So when the separation of Sky and Earth, the act of 'creation' essential to life but also involving death, had first been effected, 'The gods all wailed, and called upon the Aśvins to "Reunite them"' (punar ā vahatāt, RV.X.24.5): so 'the Gods let them together, (samanayan, as the Queen is "led" in the Aśvamedha), and coming together, they performed this Divine Marriage' (Saṃyatāv etaṁ devavivāhaṁ vyavāhetām, AB.IV.27) and as in VS.II.16: 'Consent ye together (saṁjānatham), Sky and Earth; aid ye us with rain.'[24]

In a heavy and prolonged downpour primitive man thought all distinction between heaven and earth was effaced and that the cosmic moieties were copulating – '. . .So when it rains hard all day and night

[they] say: "Earth and Sky have united" (Samadhātam, AA, III.1.2).'[25] This divine marriage was celebrated in the month of Phālguna (February-March). Kane explains:

. . .In the marriage hymn (Rgveda X.85.15) the words occur 'the cows are killed on the Aghās and (the bride) is carried away (from her father's house) on the Phalgunīs'. The cow was killed in Madhuparka which was offered to the bridegroom on the day of marriage. Or this may be a reference to the giving of cows by the bridegroom to the bride's father (as in the form later called ārṣa). So, it appears probable that this is a reference to marriage being performed on the day when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation of Aghās (i.e., Maghā). The two Phalgunīs follow immediately after the Maghā nakṣatra. There is an echo of this in the Āp. gr. III.1.2 which says 'cows are accepted on the Maghās and (the bride) is carried (to the bridegroom's house) on the Phalgunīs'. This means that the marriage (probably in the ārṣa form) is celebrated on the Maghās and the bride goes from her father's house on the next day after marriage or after one day more. . . . The Rāmāyaṇa (Bālakāṇḍa 72.13 and 71.24) speaks of marriage being performed in Uttarā Phalgunī, of which Bhaga is the deity. The Mahābhārata also speaks of marriage on a nakṣatra presided over by Bhaga (Ādiparva 8.16). The Kauśika sūtra (75.2.4) makes an approach to modern practice when it prescribes that marriage should be celebrated after the full moon of Kārtika and up to the full moon of Vaiśākha or one may do as one likes but should avoid the month or half month of Caitra.[26]

Bhaga is the deity of share. It means that Phālguna is the month of apportioning the communal agricultural produce among the tribal members, for that is the time when the rabi harvest is garnered. The earth mother becomes bare and exhausted, and according to the Malayalis it is the time when she menstruates. The time for the union of heaven and earth is still four months ahead. The discrepancy becomes more glaring with the Rks XIV.1.43-44:

43. As the [mighty (? *Vṛṣā*)] river (*Sindhu*) won (? *sū*) the supremacy of the streams (nadī), so be thou supreme (samrājñī) having gone away to thy husband's home.

44. Be thou supreme among fathers-in-law, supreme also among brothers-in-law; be thou supreme over sister-in-law, supreme also over mother-in-law.*[27]

Samrājñī is dissolved as sam + rāṭ, or rāṭ of phratry-mothers. In any case she was the head of a matriarchal state. Being the representative of the earth mother, she was eternal, virgin, and formed temporary alliances with any tribal member she was infatuated with.

*Note that sister-in-law and mother-in-law are in singular, while father-in-law and brother-in-law are in plural.

It is clear that a hymn which originally celebrated the periodical sacred marriages of the rāṣṭrī of a matriarchal state was adapted to a marriage of the fraternal polyandry type.

As already noted, the divine marriage of the moon god and the earth mother was supposed to take place on every new moon night, or amā-vāsyā, which is a case of matrilocal marriage, while the Vedic marriage hymn shows Sūryā going to live at her husband's house, which is a case of patrilocal marriage. Out of the eight forms of marriage described by the Smṛtis, only one form of marriage, i.e., gāndharva, comes nearest to amāvāsyā:

> In the āsura form there is practically a sale of the girl for money or money's worth and so it is not practically approved. The ārṣa is distinguished from āsura in this that in the latter there is no limit to what is taken from the bride-groom, while in the former a pair of cattle is offered as a matter of form. In the gāndharva there is no gift by the father; on the contrary the father's authority is set at naught by the girl for the time being.... In the gāndharva form the principal object was gratification of carnal desires and so it is held inferior to the first four forms and is disapproved. This kind of marriage is so called because it is prompted by mutual love and the Gandharvas were known to be libidinous as the Tai.S.VI.1.6.5 (strikāmā vai Gandharvāḥ) and Ait.Br.V.1 state. In this form at least the girl's feelings are consulted. In the rākṣasa and the paiśāca there is no gift by the father and both are or may be against the wish of the girl. The forcible carrying away of the girl is the essence of the Rākṣasa (even if there is no fight because the girl's father takes no retaliatory steps in fear of the abductor's strength).... The paiśāca is so called because in it there is action like that of piśācas (goblins) that are supposed to act stealthily by night.[28]

Gāndharva form of marriage is still in much vogue among the non-Brahminical common people of Maharashtra and it invariably takes place at night. Though paiśāca also is consummated at night, it is based on ravishing an unwilling girl in intoxication. The gāndharva form of marriage is a voluntary and transient union of two lovers, for women were unrestricted in their sexual behaviour without incurring the least amount of sin. Every woman, according to Rks XIV.2.3-4, was first enjoyed by Soma, Gandharva and Agni, and then passed on to her mortal husbands:

> 3. Soma's wife first; the Gandharva thy next husband; Agni thy third husband; thy forth, one of human birth.
> 4. Soma gave to the Gandharva; the Gandharva gave to Agni, both wealth and sons hath Agni given to me likewise this woman.[29]

All the three deities were classed as gandharvas. Agni was not the

deity of 'chastity', but of sexual promiscuity; for it was he who made the women of Māhiṣmatī uncontrollable by the menfolk. This itself denotes that the gandharva tie was easily dissoluble.

Who is a gandharva? He is usually understood to be a consort of an apsaras. According to the Buddhist cannons, gandharva was a soul, equivalent to their philosophical 'viññāṇa' (consciousness) and the liṅga-śarīra of Sāṅkhya philosophy. Questioned by Buddha, the Brahmin Assalāyana answered, 'Yes, I know how an embryo is conceived. Father and mother unite, mother has attained puberty, and gandharva is present; it is through the unity of these three (factors) that a foetus is conceived.'[30]

The belief was a popular one and not an invention of the Buddhists. Primitive man saw his dead kinsman in dreams and came to believe that the dead exist in supernatural form. That is why Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (VI.2.13) says:

> He (puruṣa) lives as long as he lives. Then when he dies, (14) then they carry him to the fire.... From this...the man arises, having the colour of light.[31]

In the matrilineal Madra country of Upaniṣadic times womenfolk of distinguished priests such as Patañcala Kāpya (son of the woman Kāpī) used to be possessed by gandharvas through whom they discoursed even on metaphysics and philosophy. Kāpya's wife used to be possessed by a Gandharva called Kabandha Ātharvaṇa:

> 1. Then Uddālaka Āruṇi questioned him. 'Yājñavalkya,' said he, 'we were dwelling among the Madras in the house of Patañcala Kāpya, studying the sacrifice. He had a wife possessed by a spirit (*gandharva*). We asked him: "Who are you?" He said: "I am Kabandha Ātharvaṇa."'[32]

The divine gift of 'possession' was handed down in matriarchal succession:

> 1. Then Bhujyu Lāhyāyani questioned him. 'Yājñavalkya,' said he, 'we were travelling around as wanderers among the Madras. As such we came to the house of Patañcala Kāpya. He had a daughter who was possessed by a Gandharva. We asked him: "Who are you?" He said: "I am Sudhanvan, a descendant of Aṅgiras."...'[33]

The manner of interrogation of a possessed person by a medicine man (bhagat) in the present-day India differs but little except in the language used. The gandharvas which possessed Mādrī priestesses were but renowned fathers such as the Vedic seers Aṅgirases and Atharvans. These gandharvas or renowned fathers in course of time

burgeoned into full-blooded gods of the non-Vedic and Vedic pantheons.

In order to find out the original and unadulterated form of divine marriage, we will have to turn to folk tradition. Fortunately a faithful account of such a cosmic marriage has been preserved by the late Anna Bhau Sathe in his remarkable Marathi novel *Fakirā*. The ritual was called 'joganīci jatrā' (fair of the priestess). Jogiṇa is derived from the Sanskrit word yoginī. It was celebrated every year on the new moon day of Āṣādha (June-July) by the peasants of that part of Sangali district through which the river Vāraṇā flows. It is the time when the ploughed earth passionately yearns to receive the celestial seminal discharge. It was the devout belief of the people in these parts that whichsoever village held that fair would be blessed with abundant rains and a sumptuous harvest.[34] On that day a young Gurava* became the jogī (Skt. yogī) and the most handsome carpenter youth personated as the jogiṇa; they were also called 'navarā' (bridegroom) and 'navarī' (bride) respectively.[35] In the afternoon the couple was taken out in a festive procession by the fair-holding village up to its outskirts in the same manner as a sīmantinī procession is taken out prior to a marriage in Maharashtra. This sīmantinī was the most ciritical part of the ritual. A village which aspired for the right of holding the fair sent its picked armed men to attack the procession and snatch away the coconut held by the 'jogiṇa' in 'her' hands. If the assailants succeeded in snatching away this prize booty and crossed the boundary of the village with it, the right to hold the fair thenceforth was theirs. This act was called 'the carrying away of the jogiṇa'.[36] The loser village was then left only with the jogī, but now 'a widower one'.[37] But, if the attack was foiled or the assailants intercepted before they crossed the village boundary, they were decapitated and their heads stuck up on the village gate.[38] That is why the jogiṇa proceeded, as the writer describes in his terse and picturesque language, in the shadow of the arms of the whole fair-holding village.[39] If the sīmantinī procession turned back safely from the outskirts of the village, with the coconut in the hands of the jogiṇa intact, the sacred marriage was supposed to have been consummated successfully. The bloody ritual then ended and the festival began.[40]

Another folk custom, still in vogue in the two villages of Kokamat-

*Musician caste of Maharashtra from which priests of mother goddesses like Saptaśṛṅgī and Eka-vīra are drawn.

hāṇa and Saṁvatsara in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, furnishes us with indirect, nevertheless invaluable, evidence. These two villages are situated on the opposite banks of the river Godāvarī. Every year, on the third day (Akṣaya-tṛtīyā) of Vaiśākha (April-May), the peasants of both the villages, after offering their devotions to the village deities Lakṣmī and Mhasobā, descend to the sands of the river and conduct an armed fight. The 'battle' goes on for five days. Formerly, many lives were lost. Even at present many are seriously injured. It is still believed that the bloodshed is essential for procuring abundant rainfall.[41] It is clearly, again, a case of sacred marriage, that of Lakṣmī and Mhasobā. To the Maharashtrian peasant Lakṣmī is not the goddess of parasitical wealth, but the deity of productive, agricultural wealth. Cattle, agricultural produce, and auspicious and prolific woman are still called Lakṣmī. Mhasobā, literally meaning buffalo bull, is her sacred consort, the significance of which will be explained in Chapter 9.

Yoginī is derived from the root yuj. The earlier and the later meanings of the root are explained by S.N. Dasgupta as follows:

> In Pāṇini's time the word yoga had attained its technical meaning and he distinguishes this root *'yuj samādhau'* (yuj in the sense of concentration) from 'yujir yoge' (root yujir in the sense of connecting). . . .[42]

Kāma-sutra (III.5.29) extolls gāndharva marriage as 'sad-yoga', meaning the best of sexual unions. Thus, yoginī means one who unites in sexual intercourse in the same manner as Nirṛti and Urvaśī. Yoginis and bhairavīs were the priestess leaders of Tāntrika sects:

> That among the Tantrikas, female shamanesses called *bhairavīs* and *yoginīs* still occupy an important place will not be doubted. Observed Needham:
>
> 'It is interesting that Tantrism, like Taoism, encouraged women adepts, and we find names such as those of Laksminkara (A.D. 729) and Sahajayogini (A.D. 765) in the list of the leaders.
>
> 'Nevertheless, the Tantrikas, as we find them, are mostly males. But the question is: Do the males as *males* participate in the Tantrika practices? The answer is in the negative. The Acarabheda Tantra prescribed:
>
> 'Worship the five principles (panca tattva), the sky-flower (*khapuspa*) and the *kula* woman. That will be *vamacara*. The ultimate force is to be propitiated by becoming a woman (vama bhutva yajet param).'[43]

The five principles of the Tāntrikas, also called pañca-makāras, were: (1) madya (wine), (2) Māṁsa (meat), (3) maithuna (sexual intercourse), (4) mudrā (fried cereals), and (5) matsya (fish).[44]

One of the peculiarities of India is that political societies that have long passed out of existence continue to live as religious sects long after that. Yoginis and bhairavis were the descendants of the rāṣṭris and devis of the matriarchal states. According to H.D. Sankalia, the sixty-four temples of Khajuraho belonged to sixty-four yoginis.[45] Yogini was one of the names of the mother goddess Durgā.

Yoga has the same meaning in Indian philosophy, of course, excepting the Yoga system of Patañjali. Early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers were called Yaugas in popular diction.[46] Chattopadhyaya explains:

> ...The word *yoga* also means *samyoga* or conjunction. The Nyaya Vaisesikas are anciently known as the followers of Yoga because they subscribe to the doctrine of creation through the conjunction of atoms....[47]

The early Sāṅkhya teachers Kapila, Āsuri, and Pañcaśikha, and the founders of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophies: Akṣapāda Gautama and Kaṇāda respectively, are included in a list of 112 yoga-ācāryas.[48] Kauṭalya in this Artha-śāstra (I.1) has recorded the close affinity between the philosophies of Sāṅkhya, Yoga (meaning Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika), and Lokāyata, by mentioning them under the common title of ānvikṣakī. Just as the 'yoga' of Prakṛti and Puruṣa produced the world in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, so also the 'yoga' of atoms produced the world in the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophies.

The sacred marriage of the jogiṇa and jogī took place on the new moon day of Āṣāḍha (June-July), when the rainy season starts in right earnest in Maharashtra. Yudhiṣṭhira, alias Dharma-rāja, the latter term meaning priest-king, the eldest of the matriarchal Pāṇḍavas, was born in the month of Śrāvaṇa (June-July) (I.122.6) as a result of the sacred union of Dharma-rāja, the divine priest-king of the dead, and Kunti, which must have taken place a year before. On the other hand, Duryodhana, the king of the patriarchal Kauravas, was born in the month of Māgha (January-February) (I.114.27; I.122.19).

As already explained, as the word for new moon day, amā-vāsyā, meant the sacred marriage of the earth and the moon, it also meant Nirṛti. Śāṅkhāyana Grhya-sūtra states that Nirṛti is the presiding deity of Mūlā asterism.[49] The sign of the zodiac for it is Mithuna, meaning couple or sexual union. But the signs of zodiac having been imported with the Greek solar calendar in Gupta times,[50] we cannot rely on that derivation. Mūlā asterism falls in the concluding half of the month Jyeṣṭha (May-June). The Vedic-equivalent of Jyeṣṭha is Śukra and its presiding deity is Tvaṣṭṛ.[51] Tvaṣṭṛ was the divine consort of the three

goddesses of the Ṛg-vedic Āprī hymns, one of the whom was Vāk. We have demonstrated that rāṣṭrī Vāk was the direct descendant of devī Nirṛti, and it was Vāk who declared: 'Whomsoever I love, him I make...Brahman'. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (I.18) specially says, 'Bṛhaspati is the Brahman and Vāk is the rāṣṭrī.' According to Chitrav, Tvaṣṭṛ was Brāhmaṇas-pati.[52] Ṛk IX.5.9 calls him Prajā-pati. Taittirīya Saṁhitā (II.5.1) narrates that Indra came to be called a 'brahman-killer' because he killed Vṛtra, and the Brahman Vṛtra was the son of Tvaṣṭṛ. Brahman also meant the moon. Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā chants in the horse sacrifice (XXIII.13) – Brahmā 'kṛṣṇaś ca no' vatu. Pathak renders it as 'May the spotless moon protect our horse.'[53] Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (III.1.6) leaves no doubt as to Brahman being the moon:

> ...Verily, the mind is the Brahman of the sacrifice. That which is this mind is yonder moon, is the Brahman....[54]

What was the criterion by which Vāk selected her periodical lovers? Apparently physical and mental excellence. Tvaṣṭṛ is the only god who is described by the Vedas as surprisingly beautiful. Ṛk X.70.9 and Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā X.30 call him cāru, meaning beautiful. Soma, the moon god, also is called beautiful (prīya-darśana) by Mahābhārata (III.294.18).

We can now conclude that the archetypal divine marriage between devī Nirṛti and Brahman Soma, and later between rāṣṭrī Vāk and Brahman Tvaṣṭṛ, took place on the new moon day of the month Jyeṣṭha (May-June). In order to mime the union of the two moieties of the earth and the heaven, the women and the men of the matriarchal agricultural tribe mated on that day promiscuously with each other; and in order to mime the divine marriage of the earth mother and the moon god, the human representatives of these deities; the tribal mother and the brahman, united with each other in sacred marriage. *This is the original unity of the two opposite systems of marriage, the communal and the individual.*

References

1. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. i, pp. 427-428.
2. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 32.
3. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, p. 207.
4. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, P. i, pp. 521-522.

5. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. I, pp. 433-445.
6. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 555-556.
7. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
8. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 13, 44.
9. Jayaswal, K.P., *Hindu Polity*, p. 28.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 277-278.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
12. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, P. i, pp. 554-556.
13. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. I, p. 447.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 652.
15. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 286.
16. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, p. 66.
17. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, p. 658.
18. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 554-556.
19. Keith, A.B., *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, p. 202.
20. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 756.
21. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, p. 128.
22. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, p. 766.
23. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upnishads*, p. 74.
24. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in Indian Theory of Government*, pp. 64-65.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.
26. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 511-513.
27. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, p. 748.
28. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, p. 519.
29. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, p. 754.
30. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, II.43.2.10.
31. Hume, R.E., *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
34. Sathe, A., *Fakirā* (Marathi), p. 22.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 64.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 31, 97.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
41. *Lok-sattā* (Marathi daily), 18-5-1972.
42. Dasgupta, S.N., *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 226.
43. Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, p. 278.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
45. *Times of India*., 10-4-1966.
46. Dasgupta, S.N., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 9.
47. Chattopadhyaya, D., "Indian Materialism – A Retrospect", in *Das Kapital Centenary Volume*, p. 148.
48. Dasgupta, S.N., *op. cit.*, p. 6.
49. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIX, p. 53-54.

50. Basham, A.L., *Wonder That Was India*, p. 493.
51. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri. *Rg-veda* (Marathi trans.) p 24.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 745.
53. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Marathi trans.), p. 108.

8

Brahman

The Brahmin priesthood, which later developed into the highest caste of the Vedic and post-Vedic society, is commonly believed to have been an institution of Aryan origin. As the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, Vṛtra was the first brahman priest of the gods and the Asuras, Vasiṣṭha was the first brahman priest of the mortals. Taittirīya Saṁhitā (III.5.2) says:

> The Ṛṣis could not see Indra face to face; Vasiṣṭha saw him face to face; he said, 'Holy lore shall I proclaim to you so that people will be propagated with thee as Purohita; therefore do thou proclaim me to the other Ṛsis?' To him he proclaimed these shares in the Stoma, therefore a Vasiṣṭha shall be chosen as the Brahman priest, ...[1]

Kosambi proves that this priestly office was of pre-Aryan origin:

> The priest who sings the victory over the Ten Kings has the clan name Vasishtha ('most excellent'), still one of the traditional 'seven' major brahmin exogamous groups. The original priest had been Viśvāmitra of the Kuśika ('owl') clan. The priestly function was not as yet specialised to any one caste in the Rigveda, ... Vasishtha, however, was a new type of priest. He was begotten of the seed of two Vedic gods Mitra and Varuna, once the sun and the sky god respectively. His mother is not mentioned. On the contrary, he was – in one and the same account – 'born of the mind of Urvaśi' (an apsaras or water goddess); born also of a jar which received the combined semen of the two gods, and discovered 'clad in the lightening' in a *pushkara*. This apparently confused narrative is really quite consistent and straightforward. It means that Vasishtha came of the human representatives of a pre-Aryan mother goddess and as such had no father. Going over to the patriarchal Aryans required some respectable father and at the same time a denial of the non-Aryan mother. Agastya, founder of another major brahmin clan group still extant, was similarly born of a jar. The jar represents the womb and thereby the mother goddess. The seven main brahmin clan progenitors may go back to hoary Sumerian or Indus antiquity as the 'seven sages'; their names do not tally in the various lists given by brahmin scriptures. Viśvamitra is an eighth, the only genuine Aryan of the lot. The adoption of such 'jar-born' seers into the high Aryan priesthood was a fundamental innovation. By such recombination of Aryan and autochthone, a new class of specialists developed which would eventually, claim monopoly of all Aryan ritual — the brahmin caste. . . .[2]

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa gives us the account of the first ever royal consecration that was performed, and which thenceforth became the prototype of royal consecrations. In it Vasiṣṭha officiated as the brahman priest, Viśvāmitra as the hotṛ priest, Jamadagni as the adhvaryu priest and Yāsya as the udgātṛ priest (VII.16). It denotes that priestly functions such as that performed by a hotṛ were of Aryan origin, while that of brahman at least was of pre-Aryan origin.

But we have already seen that in a matriarchal state the priestly function along with the regnal one, was vested in women. Then what was the original function of brahman? Nighaṇṭu tells us that brahman meant food (II.7.25) and also wealth (II.10.24). Brahman also meant a magical hymn, by which, as the famous Ṛg-vedic hymn II.23 shows, a tribe expected to secure food and wealth. But these are later meanings attributed to brahman when the male had succeeded in appropriating the sacerdotal function from the female. In order to arrive at its original meaning, we will have to turn to the non-Brahminical sources.

Digha-nikāya contains the story of the origin of the Śākya tribe as told by Buddha to the Brahmin Ambaṭṭha.[3] The father of the four progenitors of the Sākya tribe, king Okkāka, begot a son called Kaṇha on his female slave Disā. Coming of age, he went to a country in South India, learnt the brahman hymn, and returning demanded of the king the hand of the princess Madda-rūpī. The enraged king put an arrow to his bow to kill the sage Kaṇha, but paralysed by the sage's power, could neither discharge the arrow nor take it back. The ministers and tribal elders approached the sage and entreated him to release the king from the spell. The sage answered that the king would free himself from the spell only by discharging the arrow in either of the three manners – if shot down at the earth, the whole country would crack up as in an earthquake; if shot upwards, rains would be withheld by the god for seven years from the country; and, lastly, if shot at the eldest prince, the heir to the kingdom, he would be rendered hairless. The king released himself by choosing the third alternative, and propitiated the sage by giving the princess in marriage to him.

The story makes it clear that the brahman hymn was rain-making magic. A misconception must be cleared before proceeding further with the discussion. Durga explains the appellation devi of Vak in Rk VIII.100.11 as meaning 'giver of waters'.[4] The deity of rain cannot be a female one. The Maharashtrian peasants still refer to rain simply by

the masculine term 'deva' (god). The ministers of king Okkāka and the tribal elders supplicated the sage Kaṇha – 'Let the god (devo) rain.'[5] Buddha, explaining the ceaseless cycle of wordly life, told the Brahmin Udaya of Sāvatthi – 'Again and again rains the king of gods.'[6] The thera bhikkhu Girimānanda exultingly chanted – 'The god rains like (the strains of) a beautiful song.'[7]

The Vedic deity of rain, Parjanya, is a male. Ṛks V.83.1, 4* invoke Parjanya to fertilise the plants and the earth with his showers of semen:

Sing with these songs thy welcome to the Mighty, with adoration, praise and call Parjanya.

The Bull, loud roaring, swift to send his bounty, lays in the plants the seed for germination.

4. Forth burst the winds, down come the lightning flashes: The plants shoot up, the realm of light is streaming.

Food springs abundant for all living creatures, what time Parjanya quickens earth with moisture (retasā).[8]

That is why the Atharva-vedic hymn XII.1.12 calls earth the mother and rain the father of mankind – '. . .earth (bhūmi) is mother, I am earth's son; Parjanya is father'.[9]

Like the primitive people all over the world, ancient Indians believed that the moon is the cause of rain. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VIII.28) echoes this popular conception – '. . .From the moon is rain born!'[10] Soma being the moon god, Ṛk I.164.35 describes his virility by comparing his semen with that of a mighty horse. In the horse sacrifice the tribal mother (ambā or mahiṣī) addressed the slaughtered horse as 'the giver of semen' (reto-dhā) and invoked him to pour his semen in her womb.[11] The sacrificial horse was but the representative of Soma, the moon god, while the tribal mother represented the earth mother. Reto-dhā also means 'rain-maker'. Moon, the 'rain-maker', is called by the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (III.1.6) brahman.

The function of brahman is best illustrated by the story of Ṛṣya-śṛṅga occurring in Rāmāyaṇa (I.9-10) of which it forms an organic part, in Mahābhārata (III.110-113) where it is retold along with the story of Rāmāyaṇa, and in the Buddhist Niḷinikā Jātaka (256) where it is narrated as a folk tale. All the three tales begin with the account that the concerned kingdom – Aṅga in the epics and Kāsi in the

*The seer of the hymn, significantly enough, is Atri Bhauma. Bhauma means son of Earth Mother.

Jātaka – were afflicted with a terrible and prolonged famine. The Jātaka account is more graphic:

Śakra withheld rain for three years from the whole of the Kāsi country. . . . Agriculture ceased. Famine stalked the land. The afflicted people assembled before the palace and clamoured, 'O god (deva)! make rain (deva)!'[12]

King Brahma-datta of Kāsi then told his daughter Niḷinikā:

The country is burning, and the communal agriculture is perishing.[13]

The true cause, or rather the popular notion of the cause, is given only by Mahābhārata (I.110-72-45). Soma-pāda, the king of the Aṅga country, was forsaken by the offended Brahmins, as a result of which Indra withheld rain from the kingdom. The three stories agree that the only remedy against the famine was union of the princess – Śāntā in the epics, and Niḷinikā in the Jātaka – with the virile young sage Ṛṣya-śṛṅga, who had been brought up by his father in a forest in such a manner that he had no inkling even of the existence of the fair sex. The epic tales show the king sending beautiful prostitutes to entice the forest-dwelling sage to the capital, while the Jātaka shows the king sending his daughter herself to the forest with the following command:

Come hither, O Niḷinikā, go and copulate with the Brāhmaṇa.[14]

The Rāmāyaṇa story narrates that as the prostitutes were bringing Ṛṣya-śṛṅga to the capital, the god all of a sudden poured forth rain on the country (I.10.29). The Mahābhārata version relates that it rained as soon as Ṛṣya-śṛṅga was ushered into the women's apartment of the palace (III.113.10).

But the Jātaka tale is nearest to the original conception of rain-making magic. It relates that Śakra released rain over the Kāsi kingdom as soon as the intercourse between the Khattiyā Niḷinikā[15] and the Brāhmaṇa Isi Siṅga took place.[16] It is significant that Isi Siṅga copulated with Niḷinikā thrice, which denotes that it was a ritual intercourse; for in the Ṛk X.95.5 Urvaśī tells Purūravas, that thrice a day did he copulate with her. According to Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, it was not just a ritual copulation. Rāmāyaṇa and (I.10.32) relates that king Romapāda gave princess Śāntā in marriage to Ṛṣya-śṛṅga. It was a sacred marriage of Kṣatra and Brahman as brilliantly postulated by Coomaraswamy:

It may be said that the whole of Indian political theory is implied and summed in the words of the marriage formula 'I am That, thou art This, I

am Sky, thou art Earth', etc. addressed by the Brahman Priest, the Purohita, to the king in AB.VIII.27. This being so, and as it has been pretended that these words were addressed by the King to the Priest, it becomes desirable, if the theory is to be understood, to establish once for all that, as is explicitly stated by Sāyana, it is the Purohita that utters them. A comparative study of many other contexts will show, indeed, that it is inconceivable that they should have been spoken by the King, who is unquestionably the 'feminine' party in the 'marriage' of the Sacerdotium (brahma) and the Regnum (kṣatra).[17]

He further goes on to elaborate:

That these words to which Sāyaṇa refers as the rājñaḥ purohita varaṇa mantram, could only have been spoken by the Purohita to the King may be said to have been proved by the already accummulated evidence of the masculinity of the Sacerdotium with respect to the Regnum. That amo'ham asmi must have been spoken by the Priest is further confirmed by the fact that in CU.V. 2.6 the would-be king addresses the Fire (the archetype of the Purohita) with the words amo nāmā 'si, 'Thy name is That (or 'He'), cf. CU.VI.1.1 'Sā is This (Earth), ama is Agni.' That it is the Purohita that utters the words 'I am That (or He)' is stated explicitly by Sāyaṇa (AB.VIII.27, commentary, Bib. Ind., 1896, IV. 288, line 8, Purohitaḥ aham amaḥ). Sāyaṇa also makes it clear that the whole of the rest of this section, beginning with yā oṣadhi. . . , is likewise spoken by the Purohita, who thus consecrates the seat given to him by the king and at the same time blesses the realm. The Purohita is the 'man' and the king the 'woman'. Observe that it is to the King that the words 'Bear thou rule' (tvaṁ vi rāja) are addressed in AV.III.4.1, and it is with reference to a wife that the words 'let her bear rule' (vi rājatu) are spoken in AV.IV.36.3.[18]

Ritual preserves a reality that is no more. The homosexual marriage of the 'female' king and the 'male' priest is but the patriarchal modification of the matriarchal sacred marriage of the rāṣṭrī with a brahman. Kerala, again, throws more light on this phenomenon.

The period prior to A.D. 216 in the history of Kerala is called the 'Brahman period'. The basic units of this society were ṭaras and saṅkeṭams:

. . .According to tradition and the Kēralōtpaṭṭi the Brahmans who had been prevailed upon by Paraśu Rāma, to colonise this new land and who, it is said, were rewarded by him with the gift of the whole land after fixing the ṭaras (Nayar villages) and Saṅkēṭams (literally 'appointed places' or a division of the Brahman dominions answering somewhat to the English Pale in Ireland), established 64 gramams or Brahman villages and introduced a somewhat republican government. . . .[19]

The literal meaning of saṁketa is sexual engagement. Mahābhārata (II.27.16, 32.9) narrates that Arjuna and Nakula, separately and in

different directions, conquered tribes who were called Utsava-Saṅketas. Commentator Nilkantha explains:

Among the Utsava-Samketas, mutual attachment between the male and the female was sufficient ground for sexual engagement. Marriage system did not exist among them. Sexual life was indiscriminate as among the beasts.[20]

Utsava means festival, and the compound utsava-saṅketa should mean festival at which promiscuous sexual intercourse took place. Hence, Utsava-saṅketa is not the name of a particular tribe or tribal confederation, but a general term for tribes who followed the custom of Utsava-saṅketa.

'Tha' means food in Sanskrit. The Nayar ṭara is also derived from the root ṭa, meaning mother.[21] The Tamil word for mother is ṭi.[22] An elderly Buddhist nun was called theri and a woman in general was called itthi in Pali. A woman is called theī in the Bhilori dialect of the Bhīl tribals living in Dhule district of Maharashtra. The *tribe* lives in a continuous belt starting from the western half of Dhule district, and reaches up to Rajasthan via Valsad, Surat, and Broach districts of Gujarat. Thus, the root 'ṭa' or 'tha' meant woman or mother in many of the non-Sanskrit languages and dialects. The synonym for therī in Sanskrit is stha-virā. The word evidently is derived from the non-Sanskrit root tha and not from the Sanskrit root sthā as it is made out to be. Indrāṇī calls herself viriṇī in the Ṛk X.86.9. The word generally means heroine. But, viriṇa is a synonym of iriṇa, thus having the meaning rāṣṭra communal land. Hence, viriṇī is a synonym of rāṣṭri or devi, and sthavirā, which later came to mean an elderly priestess, must originally have been an epithet of the mother of a clan or phratry or tribe.

The word sthala has shared the same fate. Pāṇini's rule IV.1.42 renders it as 'a natural (a-kṛitrima) dry land'.[23] But, land artificially irrigated by river water is still called thaḷa in Maharashtra. Evidently, thaḷa is derived from the same root tha, and as mātṛkā means a canal, thaḷa also means land watered by a canal. The term stha-pati, which has defied satisfactory explanation, must have meant superintendent of the irrigated land in Buddha's time. Isi-datta Purāṇa was the tha-pati of king Pasenadi of Kosala.[24] There were also other tha-patis like Pañcaka-aṅga in Śrāvastī.[25]

Ṭaṛa is defined by Padmanabh Menon as follows:

. . .The unit of the social system was the joint family, suited to an infant stage of society. A number of such joint families of the early settlers in, or

colonists of, Keralam associated themselves for political and administrative purposes and established village communities, the Brahman village communities being designated Gramams, and the non-Brahman, Tara, Kara, Piṭika,* Cheri, Muri, and Deśam as localities varied. . . .[26]

Thurston and Rangachari give a more specific definition of ṭaṙa:

. . .The tara was the Nayar territorial unit of organisation for civil purposes, and was governed by representatives of the caste, who were styled Karanavar or elders. . . . There seem to have been four families of them to each tara. . . .[27]

It has already been explained that joint family is a feudal institution which originated from the pre-feudal institution of a clan, and as a ṭaṙa consisted of several joint families, it evidently was a phratry settlement of the Nayars. A ṭaṙa or deśam was a territorial unit subserving administrative and political purpose, while a ṭaṙavād was a kinship organisation subserving the purpose of regulating the succession and inheritance of property and kingdom in the female line by the non-Brahminical law called Marumakkaṭṭayam. Ṭaṙa or deśam was headed by a male called desaway or deśvāli, and though a male karanaver managed the property of a mother ṭaṙavād or its ṭavali and represented it administratively and politically, a ṭaṙavād and its ṭāvalis retained their matriarchal character in all other respects:

The property and the house in a *thārwad* all belong to the women of the family, but the actual manager is the eldest male who is called the *karnavan*, which is derived from a Sanskrit root and means 'one who does things' and is equivalent to the northern word *karta*. The succession to *karnavan-ship* is according to age and generation. A man is succeeded by his younger brothers and then by his eldest sister's eldest son. A man or a boy is known by his name and the name of the *thārwad* to which he belongs. The *thārwad* is always named after an ancestress and referred to as *thārwad* of so and so (woman). If a man does not belong to a *thārwad* he is not respected and I was told by an officer in a mill that though he was well educated and a salaried man he had not the requisite social position as they were landless orphans. If he bought land, built a house and settled there with his sister, bringing up her children, he would gain social status. He said he knew of many a poor labourer serving in the mill, saving money to establish a *thārwad* in his sister's name and become 'somebody' in his caste.[28]

A Karanaver (Karṇavan) is generally the mother's brother and is called ammān.[29] Ammān is derived from ammā, meaning mother.[30]

*The Pali word piṭaka (e.g., Vinaya-piṭaka) means basket. Evidently it has something to do with piṭika.

The term for maternal uncle, widely prevalent in non-Dravidic India, is māmā, and it is also derived from mā, meaning mother. From this it becomes evident that the functions of management of property and administrative authority that have been exercised by the eldest male of a matrilineal clan were originally the prerogatives of the ammā or mā of that clan. Similar is the case with the political headship of a matrilineal phratry. Dēśavāli is compounded from two words – dēśa and vāli. Vāli or vazhi means line of descent.[31] The Marathi and Gujarati equivalent of this official was desāi. The word apparently is a compound of deśa and āi, meaning mother of a deśa, an evident synonym of janapada-kalyāṇī.

It has already been shown that ṭaṙavād was originally a phratry and it was composed of clans called ṭāvalis. Before the enactment of tenancy laws, the land of a mother ṭaṙavād and its daughter ṭāvalis was jointly owned.[32] *It clearly means that as far as the ownership of land was concerned, a phratry was the most important and basic constituent of the matriarchal agricultural tribe, and that is why the basic territorial, administrative and political unit of Kerala was a ṭaṙa*

Now what does a grāma mean? It is usually taken in the sense of a village. According to Vinaya-piṭaka there were one-clan villages as well as multi-clan villages.[33] Its other connotation becomes clear from the advice Vidura gave to Dhṛtarāṣṭra (I.114.38-39):

An individual should be abandoned in the interests of a clan, a clan in the interests of a phratry, a phratry in the interests of a tribe, and the whole earth in the interests of spiritual salvation.

Irawati Karve observes that villages in Northern India are settled by one clan, while the ones in Southern India are settled by several inter-marrying clans.[34] It means that while grāma in patriarchal regions of ancient India meant a clan settlement, it meant a phratry settlement in matriarchal or matrilineal regions. Thus, grāma in Kerala also meant phratry. The Nayar ṭaṙa and the Brahman grāma were related to each other by saṅketa or sexual engagement. This is borne out by the peculiar and age-old practice of sambandham marriage between Nayar and Kṣatriya women and Nambūṭiri males, on which valuable light has been thrown by Irawati Karve. Nambūṭiri Brahmins have been patriarchal, in contradistinction to the rest of the Malayali people who have been matrilineal. Only the eldest one or two sons in a Nambūṭiri family were allowed to marry – of course in his

own caste – and the rest of the sons formed sambandham relations with Nayar or Kṣatriya women.[35] But it should be noted that though the eldest son of a Nambūṭiri joint family could marry and live the life of a family man, he also contracted sambandham relation with a Nayar or a Kṣatriya woman.[36] In this relation the Nambūṭiris were occasional visitors to the houses of their Nayar or Kṣatriya consorts: '...There is a village near Cochin belonging to a rich Nayar *thārwad* which is called "the village of evening visits of the Nambudris." '[37] A fuller account of this sambandham relation is given by the authoress as follows:

> In matrilineal houses the father is a visitor to the house of his wife but among well-to-do Kshatriyas the Nambudri father many times lives in the house of his wife. If he is an elder son of a Nambudri household he has also a home and wife of his own at the patrilineal house of his Nambudri kin. Such a man divides his time between the two houses. In his Nambudri house he is the master of the house and property and has the responsibility of bringing up his children. In his Kshatriya wife's house he has no standing at all. He is a friend and lover of the woman, a friend and sometimes a teacher of his children but the children are under the guardianship of his wife's brother, i.e., the maternal uncle. One must add all the caste taboos against taking food together to understand this peculiar position. A Nambudri is flattered if he has such a Kshatriya connection, especially if he is the consort of a princess. The Kshatriya women or their guardians pick and choose the best Nambudri youths. They must be of a well-to-do family, learned and good-looking. The Nambudri man who resides in his wife's household does not take his food with the family but eats apart. He has his Brahminical baths and ritual performances. Custom forbids his friendly relations with his wife whom he may see only occasionally as she is in the inner apartments. He spends his time reading Sanskrit, playing chess or organising Kathakali dance performances. He can be and many times is a friend of his children, but as they grow and assume different responsibilities they drift away from him. I was in a Kshatriya household taking blood samples. I had taken the sample from all but one – an old man standing a little apart and looking on. Then I told one of the young men that I would take the old man's sample too. I was answered, 'You may if you like, but he is not one of us. He is our Nambudri father.' Later enquiry revealed that he was a younger son of a Nambudri, taken into the Kshatriya household as the husband of the eldest daughter and had lived there and grown old almost like a dependant....[38]

The Kṣatriyas of Kerala belong to the same stock racially and culturally as the Nayars.[39] If we weed out the extraneous and disturbing factors such as the hypergamy existing among the Kṣatriyas and Nayars, and also the custom allowing only the eldest one or two sons of a Nambūṭiri family to marry, we reach the original custom of saṅketa or sambandham between the females of a Nayar

phratry and the males of a Nambūṭiri phratry in ancient matriarchal Kerala. Being descended from a common ancestress, the members of a phratry could not have sexual relations within that phratry, and being a matriarchal tribe, the males of a phratry entered into matrilocal and polyandrous relations with the females of another phratry. Hamilton, who is quoted by Thurston and Rangachari, says that Nayar women entered into marriage relations simultaneously with several men.[40] Briffault quotes several such early accounts recorded by other European travellers.[41] That these husbands of a Nayar woman belonged to other taṛavāds is set out in clear terms by Irawati Karve:

> ...It (thārwad) is made up of a woman and her sisters and brothers, the sons and daughters of herself and of the sisters' daughters. The husbands of all the women of this household belong to other *thārwads* and visit the wives occasionally of an evening or are sometimes called for a special feast. The wives of all the males of this *thārwad* also live in other *thārwads* and are visited there by the males. Thus the family does not allow any affinal relations to live in the same household as the blood relations. Also excluded from the household are the children of the males, though they are blood-relations. A man's mother, brothers, sisters, mother's sisters, mother's brothers, sister's sons and daughters share the house.... Sometimes as an exception, one affinal relation is brought to stay in this matrilocal family. This relation is the wife of the eldest male *karnavan*....[42]

There are few terms for affinal relations by marriage among matriarchal or matrilineal peoples. The Nayars have no term for a husband's brother.[43] A husband and wife are 'friends' to each other in such societies, which clearly denotes that they come from different phratries of the same tribe. After a detailed examination of the kinship terms used by the matriarchal and matrilineal people of India, Irawati Karve sums up:

> Words for relationship through marriage are very few. In a matriarchal society where the husband is a visitor or a respected stranger living in his mother-in-law's compound one expects a paucity of terms for marital relations. This as we have seen, is also the case with matrilineal Kerala situated diagonally at the opposite end of the country from Assam and its hills.
>
> The words for husband or wife (among the Khasis) are *shkaw*, *tnga* or *lok* (friends)....[44]

By this law of matrilocal marriage, promiscuous or polyandrous or dual, a matriarchal or matrilineal tribe is reproduced. The Nayar tribe was reproduced by this same law. But where does the Brahman

come in this set-up? The union of a Kṣatriya female and a Nambūṭiri male produced a Kṣatriya progeny:

> . . .Generally a Kshatriya male is the child of a Kshatriya female and a Nambudri male. A Kshatriya male cannot get a Nambudri woman, but is the husband of a Nayar or Kshatriya woman and his children are thus either Nayars or Khatriyas of the second rank. Thus only a Kshatriya *woman* could have a Kshatriya progeny of the first rank while all the children of the Kshatriya males would go down in the social scale....[45]

This is the law by which the ruling phratry of the Nayar tribe has reproduced itself:

> Tripunnithera is the Royal suburb of Cochin. There are over a hundred houses there, all belonging to the royal princesses whose sons were likely heirs to the chiefdom of Cochin. The first two or three houses were of quite good dimensions, the next twenty like the bigger bungalows of the middle class merchants of Cochin and the rest were quite humble indeed. In each house was one princess and her Nambudri husband, with her brothers, sons and daughters. . . .[46]

The original function of a Brahman was expressed a little rudely but aptly by an unsophisticated Nayar youth:

> In Cochin I met another young man who described the Numbudri in the matrilineal house as "the male concubine" of the mother. To my protest that he was putting it rather crassly he countered by asking me if I could think of any other function which the Nambudri fulfilled. He said that the best looking Nambudries were always selected by the powerful houses and the result was the very handsome rulers of Cochin and Travancore. . . .[47]

The criterion of the selection of a Nambūṭiri husband by a Kṣatriya princess is the same as was that with the rāṣṭri – devi Vāk. This law of producing a Kṣatriya is as old as matrilineality itself. The first king of Cochin was the fruit of the union of the sister of the last Chēramān Perumāl and Perimpatappu Nambūṭiri.[48] Thus, Kṣatriya progeny was the outcome of the sacred marriage of Kṣatra and Brahman. Now, what does the term Kṣatra connote? According to Pāṇini's rule IV.1.138, Kṣatriya is the progeny of Kṣatra. Patañjali passes over this rule in silence. Later commentaries such as Kāśikā and Siddhānta-kaumudī explain that the son of a Kṣatra father and mother is a Kṣatriya. This interpretation is true as far as the law obtaining in the Kṣatriya obligarchies and the cātur-varṇya monarchies of Buddha's and Pāṇini's times are concerned. Buddha himself defined that only the offspring of a union between a Khattiya male and Khattiya female could be a Khattiya, and not otherwise.[49] In Nighaṇṭu kṣatram means water (I.12.45) or wealth (II.10.9). Nirukta (III.20) renders it as gold. Thus, etymologically the Aryan Kṣatriya had no connection whatsoever with any productive activity except wealth. The Ṛg-vedic hymn IV.57, which was to be chanted before or after ploughing a field,[50] commences with the invocation of the Lord of the field (Kṣetrasya Patiḥ). This word, occurring in Nighaṇṭu (V.4.8), is rendered by Nirukta (X.14, 15, 16) as the Lord of the Abode and completely identified with Vāstoṣ Patiḥ! Apparently the Aryan Kṣatriya arose out of a predominantly pastoral tribal society when it already had developed classes, wherein he was a ruler and soldier par excellence.

The only scholar – excepting of course Chanana – who sensed that there existed some basic difference between the Kṣatriya of the Brahminic cātur-varṇya and the Khattiya of the non-Brahminic east, was Fick. But, unfortunately, he did not and could not go beyond enunciating the problem.[51] The solution of the problem lay verily in the direction and the period to the investigation of which he has devoted his classic work. Buddha defined Khattiya for the Brahmin Vaseṭṭha as meaning 'lord of the field' ('. . .Khettānam adhipati ti kho. . .Khattiyo. . .').[52] As the civilisation based on khetta or agriculture was already in existence for at least a millennium when the pastoral Aryans entered India, and as they took quite a long time to settle down – and that too indifferently – to agriculture, they were not interested in acquainting themselves with the real etymology of Kṣatra, or even connecting Kṣetrasya Patiḥ with Kṣatra.

We have already seen that the lords of the communal field in the pre-Aryan Indus civilisation as well as in the matriarchal and matrilineal societies like the Khasis and the Malayalis respectively were women. Hence, *Kṣatra literally meant women of the ruling phratry of the matriarchal agricultural tribe, and as matriarchy was the rule of women exclusively, the sacred marriage of female Kṣatra and male Brahman was consummated to generate not a male Kṣatriya, but a female Khattiyā, a potential rāṣṭrī or devī of the tribe.*

Such was the sacred marriage that took place between the Vidarbha princess Lopāmudrā and the non-Aryan pitcher-born Brahman Agastya, recorded by the Ṛg-vedic hymn I.179. The deity of the hymn itself is 'Sexual Union' (Ratiḥ). The object of the coition is of course progeny (prajā). The hymn is a ritual drama, to be sung and acted. Ṛks 1-4 and 6 appear in free rendering as follows: I

> Lopāmudrā – 'Through many autumns have I toiled night and day. Every dawn brings old age nearer and nearer. Old age impairs the beauty of our

bodies. Hence, let the wife and the virile males unite.

'Even in days of yore, meritorious men who declared eternal statutes along with gods, did not remain celibate. Hence, let the wife unite with the virile ones.'

Agastya – 'We have not toiled in vain. The gods themselves protect us and enable us to triumph over our enemies. Hence, our coition is sure to bear fruit.

'My whole body is inflamed by passion in the same way as the pent up waters of a great river. Though virile and mighty as I am, this Lopāmudrā has exhausted me in copulation and am breathing heavily.'

Disciple – 'Digging (the earth) with a spade, the sage Agastya, desirous of (multiplying) the tribe, progeny and prowess, sustained both the varṇas, and secured a place among the gods.'

The most probable connotation of 'both the varṇas' is kṣatra and brahman. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (IV.1.5) relates the tale of the sacred marriage of the Brahman Cyavana Bhārgava and the Kṣatra Sukanyā, the daughter of king Saryāta. Bṛhad-devata (V.30) mentions the sacred marriage of the Brahman Śyāvāśva and the daughter of king Rathaviti Dārbhya. The first and real Brahman consort of Kunti was Dur-vāsas (I.110.4-7). The compound means 'one clad in dirty or no garments'. Chitrav informs us that he was a representative of the Vedic seers called Vāta-raśanās, literally meaning naked. The Rg-vedic hymn X.136 gives a graphic description of these sages.[53] Purūravas, the periodical royal consort of Urvaśī, the rāṣṭrī of the Kāśis (Rāmāyaṇa, VII.56.26-27), was the product of the sacred marriage of Ilā, rāṣṭrī of the Bāhlikas, and Budha, the son of the moon god Soma (VII.87-89). Ilā addressed Budha as Brahman (VII.89.16). Budha was the reputed son of Soma by the earth goddess, most probably Nirṛti. Budha is the seer of the Rg-vedic hymn X.101, which is a ritual miming of agricultural work.[54] The most significant Rk 3 is given below in free rendering:

Make ready the ploughs (by binding securely its composite parts); fasten the yokes (on the bullocks), till the field; sow the seeds in the womb; let our chants raise a plentiful harvest; apply the sickles to the ripe grain.

Purūravas, though the son of the queen of the matriarchal Bahlikas, did not succeed her. He migrated to Pratiṣṭhāna, the capital of the Kāśi kingdom, ruled by Urvaśī, or her human representative and married her. It can be reasonably inferred that Ilā must have been succeeded by her daughter.

The historical role of Paraśurāma has been completely misunderstood. He is invariably believed to have been one of the

staunchest and the most ruthless of the champions of patriarchy. Ehrenfels has systematised the prevalent conception thus:

...Paraśurāma representing the last of several Aryan waves of immigration, successfully establishing the patriarchal principle at last, and crushing the resistance of the matriarchally determined indigenous Indus-civilisations....[55]

Dange agrees with this notion in toto.[56] Mahābhārata (I.64,5,7) describes the situation after the 'total' and repeated messacres of Kṣatriyas by Paraśurāma as follows:

When the world was made Kṣatriyaless by the Bhārgava, O king, the Kṣatriya women who were desirous of progeny resorted to the Brahmins.

Thousands of Kṣatriya women, impregnated by the Brahmins, O king, then gave birth to the bravest of Kṣatriyas.

Two episodes offer conclusive proof that Paraśurāma was a fierce protagonist of matriarchy. Paraśurāma fought two famous duels. The first of them was with his namesake, Rāma, the son of king Daśaratha's chief queen Kausalyā, produced on her through ni-yoga by the Brahman Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. Paraśurāma accosted Rāma as he was on his way back to Ayodhya along with his bride Sita, the daughter of Earth Mother. Paraśurāma charged Rāma (I.75.12):

One of the two bows (fashioned by Viśva-karman), called the destroyer of three cities, was bestowed by the gods on the bellicose Tryambaka, and that bow has been broken by you, O Kākutstha, leader of men!

Challenging Rama to duel Paraśurāma said (I.75.27.29):

I have rushed here, having heard of the destruction of the bow. Apply to this great bow (of mine) an arrow capable of capturing the cities of the enemies. If you prove yourself capable of it, then, O Kākutshta, I shall fight a duel with you.

The bow broken by Rāma belonged originally to the Rudras, the phratry of the triune mother Try-ambā. Rāṣṭrī Vāk declared in the Rk X.125.6 that it was she who stretched the bow for Rudra. The bow was a heirloom of the dynasty of the Janakas (I.66.12), the kings of the Videha people. It was a symbol of matriarchy, and it was broken by Rāma.

Who were the Janakas? Janaka, literally meaning 'begetter', which later came to mean father, was the title of a royal dynasty (I.71.4), and not the name of a single individual. They were a line of priest-

kings famous in antiquity for their knowledge of Vedic lore and metaphysics. Earth Mother was the mother-goddess of the Videhas, for Rama called Earth his mother-in-law (VII.98.7). But, though Janaka was the royal consort of the human representative of the earth goddess, he was not the father of Sītā, the daughter of Earth Mother. Janaka himself, relating her birth-story to the sage Viśvāmitra, said that she came out of his field as it was being ploughed for sacrificial purpose (I.66.13). It is an euphemistic way of describing the underlying reality, according to which Sītā was born out of the sacred union of the rāṣṭrī of the matriarchal Videhas, the human representative of the earth goddess, and their Brahman priest of the Gotama gotra. Male kingship of the Janakas, which had superimposed itself on the matriarchal set-up, had to preserve the magical ritual of Kṣatra-Brahma sacred union; for it was universally believed that the ritual ensured the reproduction of the tribe and nature. The Janaka institution of male kingship, which started with alien princes such as Purūravas and the Perumāls, taken up initially as periodical consorts by the rāṣṭris of the Videha tribe, became permanent and patrilineal with the rise of Sītā, which also means crown land,[57] the first ever individually owned land which came to be separated from the tribal rāṣṭra land. (This point will be dealt with at length later on.) The Janakas first secured their male kingship by overthrowing the supremacy of the priestess of the mother goddess of the Videhas – Ahalyā. The word A-halyā literally means unploughed earth, apparently a name of Earth Mother. The priestess of the mother goddess, known by the same name, was living in a sacred grove near Mithilā, the capital of the Videhas (I.48.11), leading the life of a cursed and dicarded 'adulteress" (I.48.19, 32) when Viśvāmitra led the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa towards the city. She was the mother of Śatānanda, the then high priest of the Videhas, and apparently, also of Sītā. Janaka told Viśvāmitra that Sītā was vīrya-śulkā (I.66.14, 16), which is understood to mean that she could be obtained by paying the price (śulka) of performing the valiant act (vīrya) of stringing the try-ambaka bow (I.66.18-19). But vīrya also means semen, and with this meaning of the word. Sītā becomes a dharma-naṭī like the princess Kāli of the Dāśas and the mahiṣi Śīlavatī of the Mallas. Her mother Ahalyā had already been maligned by patriarchy and by one of its greatest poets, Vālmiki, as 'dur-vṛtā, (I.48.32). The dynasty of Ahalyās had practised periodical and matrilochal sacred marriages with Janakas, and the price charged for it was virility

(vīrya) of the male with whom she mated. But with Sītā, the matrilochal marriage was transformed into its opposite, patrilochal marriage, by her being sent away to her husband's house. Rāma was carrying away with him the living and supreme symbol of the matriarchy of the Videhas to Ayodhyā, the bastion of patriarchy. That is why Rāma was challenged to a mortal duel by Paraśurāma. But, in it Paraśurāma, and along with him matriarchy, were worsted by Rāma (I.76).

Paraśurāma fought the second duel with his own disciple, the patriarch Bhīṣma (V.173.192), one of the most dominating figures of Mahābhārata. Bhīṣma's social outlook is succinctly summed up by the answer he gave to devi Draupadī's question, who after being enslaved by the Kauravas along with her Pāṇḍava husbands, was on the point of being stripped naked by Duḥśāsana before the tribal council (sabhā) of the Kurus (II.67.47):

> Taking into consideration the complexity of law, O auspicious one, I am not able to give a satisfactory answer to your question. (Though it is true that) a person is not entitled to stake anything that does not belong to him, (still, it is also true that) a woman belongs to her husband (in whatever circumstances he might be placed).

It should be noted, that Draupadī was not challenging the dominion of a 'free' husband over his wife, but was questioning whether a husband, already a slave, was entitled to stake the freedom of his wife. Bhīṣma declared in unmistakable terms that though Yudhiṣṭhira had already gambled away his freedom to the Kauravas, he had not lost his ownership of Draupadī, and hence even as a 'slave' he was 'master' enough to dispose of the freedom of his wife. Draupadī, his grand daughter-in-law, or a wife in general, was according to Bhīṣma, a slave's slave!

What gave rise to Bhīṣma's duel with Paraśurāma? The king of the Kāśis had three daughters called Ambā, Ambikā, and Ambālikā, all the three words being the synonyms of 'mother', or more specifically denoting the triune mother goddess. They being vīrya-śulkas (V.174.2), when they came of age, the king of the Kāśis held a svayaṁ-vara festival to which he invited all the desirous kings. Bhīṣma, in search of a suitable match for his youngest step-brother Vicitra-vīrya, went to the svayaṁ-vara, and brought away the three Ambās by force, defeating all those who tried to intercept him. On reaching Hastināpura, the eldest Ambā told Bhīṣma that as she was already in love with the king of the Śālva country (one of the then

classic lands of mother right), it did not behove him to marry her off to another person. Hence Bhīṣma sent her to her lover. But Śālva refused to accept her. Taking Bhīṣma to be the cause of her undoing, she sought the help of Paraśurāma. Parasurāma asked her whether she wanted to go to Śālva or Bhīṣma, and assured her that neither of the two would dare to disobey his bidding. But she urged him again and again (V.177.39) – 'Kill Bhīsma, O mighty-armed one, the cause of my calamity!' Paraśurāma then took her along with a host of Brahmin sages to Kuru-kṣetra, and camping on the banks of the river Sarasvatī, sent for Bhīṣma. After accepting the respects paid to him by his disciple, Paraśurāma bade him again and again (V.178.30, 35-36):

Hence, accept her at my bidding, O Bhārata! If you will not do what I tell you, I shall kill you along with all your kinsmen.*

We have already seen that the Kāśi country was formerly ruled by the raṣtri Urvaśi who used to enter into periodical matrilochal marriages with alien princes such as Purūravas. Purūravas' country, Bahlika, and the Salva country were adjacent to each other, and along with the Madra, etc., formed a region famous in antiquity as the classic home of mother right. The three Ambās were the descendants of raṣtri Urvasi. The age-old bond of the sacred union of the Kāśi Kṣatra and the Śālva Brahman was sundered for ever and the supreme symbol of the matriarchy of the Kasis was forcibly carried away for consummating a patrilocal marriage by Bhiṣma, the son of the mother goddess Gaṅgā. Paraśurāma commanded Bhīṣma to become the sacred and periodical consort of Amba, instead of the Śālva king, in order to turn the wheel of history back to matriarchy. He refused. The duel between the preceptor and the disciple was fought out at Kuru-kṣetra, the very place where Paraśurāma had stored into five ponds the blood of the Kṣatriyas he had massacred twenty-one times, and hence which had also come to be known as Samanta-pañcaka (I.2.4-11, III.117-9-10). The greatest hero of matriarchy again lost.

But Ambā did not give up. She entered on a terrible panance and did not cease even after half of her body was turned into a river also called Ambā (V.186,36-41), which is identified as a river flowing in the Gangetic plain above Allahabad.[58] Obtaining from Rudra, the god of matriarchy, a boon which would enable her to kill Bhīṣma in her next birth, she entered fire with the words on her lips 'for killing Bhīṣma!' (V.187-19):

*According to Pāṇini's rule IV.2.104, amātya means one who lives in the same house.

. . .Ambā commits suicide, is reborn or is transformed after rebirth into the male Sikhaṇḍin, and ultimately kills the hitherto invincible Bhīṣma in battle because he cannot fight against a woman, not even against a man who had been a woman. I might add here that Sikhaṇḍin, which means 'crested', and might be used of a peacock, is given as name or appellation of a Gandharva in AV.IV.37.7. . . . Bhīṣma is killed by the river goddess whom he rejected; the explanation that his opponent was a sexual invert will not suffice.[59]

The sacred consorts of these mother goddesses were also called 'kartas'. River goddess Gaṅgā and priest king (rāja-ṛṣi) Mahabhiṣa were once on a time cursed by the god Brahman to become mortals and thus consummate their attraction for each other which they had dared to disclose before the creator of the universe. The dejected goddess met, on her way back from the world of the universe-creator Brahman, the eight Vasus, a Brahman phratry (V.182.12; 183.7; 185.5) of the pre-Aryan five phratried tribe, who also were cursed by Vasistha to become mortals. They requested Gaṅgā to become their mother in the human world. She asked them (I.96.17):

Which of the leaders of men amongst the mortals shall become my sacred consort (kartā) for you?

The Brahma-vādin Vasus answered:

King Śantanu, the illustrious son of Pratīpa, shall become for us your sacred consort in the world of mortals.

But, true to her nature, or rather to her special function, the amorous mother goddess tried to dally with king Pratipa himself (I.97.1-7)! It is not for nothing that Daṇḍin, in his Daśa-kumāra-carita (II.3) records a folk-tradition that Gaṅga once upon a time was cursed by the elephant-headed god Gaṇa-pati that as she was enjoyed by many (bahu-bhogyā) in the celestial world, she would be enjoyed by many (aneka-sādharaṇi) also in the mortal world.

Objection may be raised that karta here means 'father' of the Vasus. But, it is impossible even grammatically and syntactically. The words 'vaḥ' (for you) and 'naḥ' (for us) used are both the dative cases of the pronouns yuṣmad (= you) and asmad (= I) respectively, and the question asked by Gaṅgā to the Vasus was provoked by her worry of finding a suitable consort in the human world.

It is pertinent to note here that Gaṅgā used to be invariably infatuated with priest-kings (rāja-ṛṣi). Mahābhiṣa was a priest-king (I.96.5) of the Ikṣvākus. Pratīpa was the priest-king (I.97.3) of the Kurus, and his son Śantanu, whom Gaṅgā chose as her sacred and

periodical consort, was the incarnation of the priest-king Mahabhiṣa himself. Gaṅgā became Śantanu's chief queen on the condition that he would not gainsay her in anything; otherwise she would leave him the moment he opposed her in anything by word or deed (I.98.3-4). She stayed with him for eight years, each year giving birth to a Vasu and immediately drowning the new-born in her own water form. Śantanu lost control and rebuked her when she was on the point of drowning the eighth Vasu, who later grew up to be Bhiṣma, meaning terrible. She spared the boy. But the condition was broken and hence she left him. The condition or compact, as already noted, was called 'samaya", and using the same term, the mother goddess desclared (I.98.17, 22): 'In accordance with the compact (samayaḥ) you had agreed to (abide by), my stay (vāso) with you has worn out.' There is an ingenious pun here on the word 'vasa'. It means life, or period of cohabitation, or cloth. *To stay with a sacred consort for a stipulated period (which will be dealt with later on) and on stipulated conditions, brooking no control, was the uncoded law (samaya) of matriarchs.* Hidimba told Kuntī that she was not a sorceress (yātudhānī) nor a night-wandering demoness (rajani-carī), but the daughter of a Rakṣas, the queen and the mother goddess of the sacred teak grove (śāla-kaṭaṅkaṭī) of that country (I.154.11). Bhīma agreed to make a compact (samaya) with her according to which he would cohabit with her till she gave birth to a son (I.154.19-20):

> O Rākṣasī, hark to the compact. I am truthfully making with you. to the period you do not give birth to a son, O auspicious one, I shall cohabit with you, O beautiful one!

That the word karta originally meant the temporary sacred consort of the rāṣṭri becomes clearer from the story of Kunti's giving birth to Karna, already alluded to. In his sacred union with Kunti, the sun god styled himself as her karta (III.306.11):

> I have come, O auspicious one, bound by the spell of your mantra.
> What should I do, speak, O queen! for being your karta, I am but your slave!

Durvāsas, who initiated Kuntī to brahmavadinī-hood, blessed her after she had attained that status that she would become a sīmantinī (II.305.14). Kṛṣṇa addressed her as sīmantinī in Udyoga-parva (90.91). Hence, sīmantinī cannot mean just a 'woman', but must have been a honorific title of the rāṣṭrī of a matriarchal tribe. There is a remarkable rite called 'sīmanta-unnayana' described at length by all

the Gṛhya-sutras. It literally means 'parting of the hair (of a woman) upwards'.[60] Manava Gṛhya-sutra (I.12.2) thinks that it forms a part of the marriage ceremony itself.[61] Atharva-vedic marriage hymn XIV.1.55 directs the parting of the bride's (Sūryā's) hair. Rest of the Gṛhya-sutras declare that it is an independent rite performed during the pregnancy of a woman. There is also a difference of opinion about the exact month of pregnancy in which the rite is to be performed:

> ...The samskara was to be performed in the 3rd month according to Kathaka gr., in 3rd, 6th, or 8th according to Manava; in the 4th month according to Asv., Ap., Hir. (II.1), in 4th or 6th according to Gobhila (II.7.2) and in the 4th, 6th or 8th according to Khadira, in 6th or 8th according to Paraskara, Yaj. (I.11), Visnu Dh. S. (27.3); in the 7th according to San. gr. (I.21.1), in the 8th according to Vaik. and Veda-Vyasa (I.18). Saṅkha as quoted in Smṛticandrika (I.p.17) says that it should be performed on the foetus beginning to move and up to the time of delivery....[62]

Its exact nature can be determined only from the actual ritual, rather than from its interpretation. Kane sums up the rite as follows:

> ...This rite is mainly of a social and festival nature intended to keep the pregnant woman in good cheer. The Saṁskaraprakasa (pp. 172-173) quotes some verses from Asvalayana stating that this rite serves the purpose of driving certain goblins that thirst for the destruction of the foetus; the parting of the hair by the husband with the quill, bunch of unripe fruits and *darbhas* and tying a garland round her neck, giving her boiled rice mixed with mudga and ghee and asking lute players to sing indicate its festive character....[63]

Ṛg-vedic hymn II.32 was chanted on this occasion. Its first Ṛk invokes heaven and earth, the second and the third invoke Indra or Tvaṣṭṛ, and the last five invoke goddesses Rākā, Sinīvālī, Guṅgu, Sarasvatī, Indrāṇī, and Varuṇānī. Ṛks 4, 6, and 7 shed light on the nature and scope of the festival:

> With noble praise I call upon Rakā of noble invocations. Let the blessed one hear us and wake up herself. With unbreakable needle let her sew the work. May she give us a hero worthy of hundredfold praise.
> O broad-hipped Sinīvālī, thou who art the sister of the gods, enjoy this oblation which is offered to thee, and grant, O goddess, offspring to us.[64]
> With lovely fingers, lovely arms, prolific Mother of many sons –
> Present the sacred gifts to her, to Sinivali, queen of men.[65]

Rākā is the first day of the dark fortnight, and Sinīvalī is the fourteenth night of the dark fortnight. Sinam means food, and hence Sinīvalī is also the goddess of food like Ilā.[66] It should be noted that

she is called the sister of the gods (devānāṁ svasā)* and also the queen of the tribe of gods (viś-patnī). From this it becomes evident that sīmanta-unnayan was a tribal festival for food and progeny. But every tribal striving was for the same objectives and hence the generality will not suffice. Rākā is shown as sewing a cloth with an unbreakable needle. The lute players (vīṇā-gāthinau) used to sing the following gāthā in this festival:

'Yaugandhari is our king', sing the women of the Śālva tribe, 'turning the (spinning) wheel and seated on thy banks, O Yamunā!'[67]

Śālva was a tribal confederation of the Bāhlika region whose territory had spread up to the banks of the river Yamunā. The country had been renowned since antiquity for its woollen, flaxen, and cotton cloth.[68] Spinning and weaving cloth have been, like agriculture, the invention of women, and in antiquity were exclusively in their hands:

Among the tribes of Manipur cloth, in ten different patterns, is produced in certain villages only. 'This industry,' says Mr. T.C. Hudson, 'is carried on by the woman alone, and the six villages, as far as possible, prevent their girls from marrying into a village where this industry is not practised.'[69]

Vedic evidence corroborates it. Atharva-vedic Rk X.7.42 chants:

42. A certain pair of maidens, of diverse forms, weave, betaking themselves to it, the six-pegged web, the one draws forth the threads (*tantu*), the other sets (them); they wrest not off (*apa-vṛj*), they go not to an end.[70]

The Atharva-vedic marriage hymn XIV.1.45 transmutes weaving into a divine trade and the cloth woven into that of fate and life:

45. They (yā) who spun, wove, and who stretched (the web), what goddesses gave the ends about, let them wrap thee (the bride) in order to old age; (as) one long-lived put about thee this garment.[71]

Mahābhārata (I.3.163-166) names the two maidens as Dhātā and Vidhātā, who weave the eternal cloth of time by black and white threads, representing night and day respectively. Dhātā and Vidhātā mean universal mothers who weave not only the web of eternal time, but also the fates of individuals in it. The Greek Moirai spun the fates of individuals:

*The etymology of svasā as given by Nirukta (II.32) is 'su + asā, i.e., she who sits (sidati) among her own people (sveṣu).' That is, she does not go to live among her husband's people.

...Their (Moirai's) names are Klotho, Atropos, and Lachesis. Klotho is simply spinning personified, and the oldest of the three. Homer speaks of them collectively as Klothos....[72]

Kausitaki Upanisad, relating the journey of the departed spirit as it enters the world of the universe-creator Brahman, goes on to say:

...the beloved Mānasi ('Mental'), and her counterpart Cākshushī ('Visual'), both of whom, taking flowers, verily weave the worlds and the Apsarases (Nymphs), Ambās ('Mothers') and Ambāyavis ('Nurses') and the rivers Ambayā ('Little Mothers').[73]

Here we have the three mothers, universal and tribal, weaving the web of time and individual fates. The cloth that the mother goddess Raka we saw weaving is thus the same cloth of fate. But for whom and for what purpose was this spinning and weaving conducted?:

...Gobhila, khadira, Bharadvāja, Pāraskara and Śankhayana prescribe the preparation of boiled rice with ghee therein or sesame and the first three of these say that the woman should be asked to look at the ghee on the mass of rice and be questioned 'What do you see' and she should be made to reply 'I see progeny' (Bhāradvāja has the reply 'sons and cattle'). Almost all the Grhya sutras agree that in parting the hair the husband is to use a bunch of unripe fruit (Gobhila, Par. and Sān. specifying that it was to be Udumbara fruit), a porcupine quill with three white spots and three bunches of Kusa grass. Pāraskara and Gobhila add the use of a Vīratara stick and a full spindle. Some like Āśvalāyana prescribes that the parting must be done thrice, Gobhila seems to prescribe it six times, while Khadira (II.2.25) expressly says that it is to be done only once. San. says that the unripe fruits are to be tied to a string of three twisted threads and the string is to be suspended from her neck as a garland. Pār. also seems to suggest the same. Ap. also says that the husband should (by way of ornament) tie a string of barley grains with young shoots on the woman's head (14.7)....[74]

Successful and fruitful conception of the Sīmantinī is mimed by the karta by parting her *black* hair backwards by the porcupine quill, etc., which action imitates the labour process of ploughing and sowing the *black* soil, and the bunch of unripe fruits represents the unripe crop. The unripe crop is the Ksatra foetus that the Sīmantinī bears. Rāka is *compelled* to weave an auspicious fate for the foetus by the magical miming of the divine spinning and weaving that the Salva women are shown doing by the gāthā, and also resorted to by the women-folk of the concerned Sīmantinī's tribe. The raṣtra tribal land also had conceived a crop, and the Karta is decking the tribal mother as the corn goddess Sinīvalī in order to ensure a bumper harvest for the tribe.

As already noted, in the matrilineal society of Kerala, Karanaver or

Kartā was the manager of the taṛavād land and he was the eldest maternal uncle of the taṛavād.[75] Similar is the case with the matrilineal Khasis:

> ...The manager of the clan lands is the Kni (maternal uncle of the youngest daughter of the main family, or branch of the clan), whose house 'ka iing khadduh', or last house, is the place for performing all the religious ceremonies of the clan, and is also called ka iing seng. All the members of the clan are, however, entitled to share in the produce of any of the clan lands they may cultivate....[76]

Thus, in the basic aspect of economic production, the Kartā in these societies, both of the Malayalis and Khasis, was the maternal uncle, while in the full-fledged matriarchical societies, the Kartā was a periodical sacred consort. This is one of the main differences between a matriarchal society and a matrilineal society. In a matrilineal society, though property may be owned and descent may be exclusively through females, the economic and political authority comes to be exercised by males, while in a matriarchal society the economic and political authority is exclusively exercised by females. *Hence, in a matriarchal society men have a subservient position in comparison to its women. That is why the Kartā sun god told rajni Kuntī that he was but her slave.*

The hero of the Babylonian 'Epic of Gilgamish' (B.C. 5000) told the lovelorn mother goddess Ishtar, that only a servile and temporary sexual relationship could exist between herself and her consorts.[77] The same servile relationship prevailed among the Natchez of North America.[78] Similar situation obtained in matrilinear Hawaii.[79] Matrilinear Ashanti, Loango, Abron and Udemba in Africa offer more parallels.[80]

Atikal is an epithet of a prince in Malayalam. The word also means a slave or a servant.[81]

The dispute whether a kartā is dependent or independent occupies an important place in Sanskrit grammar. Paninian rule I.5.54 enjoins that the main performer (kartā) intended by an action is inflected in the nominative case, e.g., Devadattah pacati (Devadatta cooks). But the problem arises in the case of the performer intended by a causative verb – Devadatto Yajñadattena odanam pācayati (Devadatta gets the rice cooked by Yajñadatta). Here, though the main performer of the action of cooking is Yajñadatta, the word Yajñadatta is inflected in the instrumental case, i.e., the real kartā is not free! The rule is literally understood to mean that the performer (of an action) is independent.

Commentator Patañjali tries in vain to prove that though the employee performer (prayojya kartā) is under the command and control of the employer performer (prayojaka kartā) in performing the action, the employee one is 'free' in performing or not performing it.[82] If the household slave of the aristocratic grammarian had disobeyed him with the words – 'I have the freedom to disobey you according to your sūtra: svatantraḥ kartā', the prayojaka kartā in the grammarian would have ominiously threatened – 'I have also the freedom to whip you even unto your supreme freedom, death!'

Pāṇini, though one of the greatest grammarians, is not the inventor of all the grammatical rules of his 'Aṣṭa-adhyāyi'; for, many illustrious grammarians preceded him, and the vast number of Sanskrit grammatical rules were in the making through several centuries before Pāṇini. Pāṇini is said to belong to the period between the sixth and fourth century B.C.; but he definitely flourished in the post-Buddha period.[83] By this time the feudal era of India had already begun, and employment of slaves in the basic means of production, namely agriculture, had long become an uneconomic proposal. Household slavery thrived as a result of the unheard of plenty conferred upon the feudal ruling class by the labour of 'free' Śūdra agricultural and handicraft workers. The feudal aristocracy, to which Pāṇini and Patañjali belonged, naturally thought these Śūdra workers to be 'free' in contradistinction to their household slaves. The prolific genius of Patañjali has not failed to describe an important aspect of the feudal mode of cultivation, which enabled the owner of land to supervise the labour performed by his hired labourers.[84]

Hence, it seems most probable that the grammarians had adopted an already prevalent sūtra for their own purpose. Patañjali defines sva-tantra as a weaver. But, trantra, as occurring in Rk X.71.9 had another meaning even in early Vedic times:

> Those unlearned ones, who do not move with these Brahmanas nor with gods nor with those that offer the *soma* libations, having created sinful words and being *sirih*, they propogate tantra (*tanvate tantram*), being without knowledge.
>
> We have here the only occurrence of the word *sirih* in the whole of the *Rig Veda* and its meaning is somewhat uncertain. Monier-Williams and Macdonell thought, though not without some hesitation, that it meant 'weavers', probably of the female sex. But Wilson rendered it as ploughman. Evidently he was following the suggestion of Sayana who interpreted the word *Sirih* as *Sirinah*, those with the *Sira* or the plough. If we were to accept this interpretation, the persons thus thrown out became the tillers of the soil....

...We have here the only mention of the word *tantra* in the whole of the *Rig Veda*. Sayana interpreted *tanvate tantram* as krisi-laksanam vistarayanti kurvanti, spread or perform agriculture....[85]

According to the Vedic evidence, sva-tantra means one who himself performs or spreads agriculture, and *this* sva-tantra was the kartā in matriarchal societies of ancient India. But why were such persons called sīrin? A plough according to Nirukta (VI.26) also means the membrum virile. Rk I.117.21 depicts the twin gods Aśvins as sowing barley with a plough:

O Aśvins, promoters of agriculture (by means of rain), sowing barley with the plough,* milking food for man, blasting the Dasyu with lightning, you made far-spreading light for the Arya.

But the classical peasant among the gods is Pūṣan. Rk I.23.15 shows him cultivating the soil with bullocks and raising barley. Rks VI.56.4 and X.26.1 invoke him by the same epithet 'dasra' by which Aśvins are invoked in Rk I.117.21, which according to Durga means 'the promoters of works like agriculture &c., by means of rain'.[86] According to Nighaṇṭu (I.1.19) Pūṣan is a synonym of earth. Thus Pūṣan in the masculine means the son of the earth. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (I.1.2.17) calls him Bhāga-dugha, meaning 'distributor of portions (to the gods)'.[87] It is evident that he inherited this function from his earth mother. In class society this function and its functionary turn into their opposites. Bhāga-dugha becomes the tax-collecting official of the king,[88] while Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (I.4.13) metamorphoses him into the Śūdra caste (varṇa) of the divine tribe of the gods![89]

Even in the heyday of Indian slavery, when all productive work was exclusively done by slaves and labourers, the sowing festival (vappa-maṅgala) had to be inaugurated by the king and the elders of the oligarchies, who had to put their hands to the ploughs on that day. The nidāna-kathā of Jātaka depicts king Suddhodana and the 799 elders of the Śākya tribe driving ploughs which had golden and silver handles respectively.[90] It shows how the original magical efficacy of the ritual cultivation of the rāṣṭra communal land by the kartā persisted tenaciously.

Another synonym of kartā is Kṣattā. Rk VI.13.2 invokes Agni (fire god) as Kṣattā. Atharva-vedic Rk IX.6.1(49) invokes Brahman as Kṣattā, who is there synonymous with bhāga-dugha.[91] Buddhist cannons use the epithet kattā only for Brahmā.[92] Kattā is the Pali for Kartā. Pali cannons have another epithet for Brahmā, namely abhi-bhū.[93] Abhi-bhū means to overcome, and hence it is the winning throw of dice. Taittiriya Saṁhitā (IV.3.3.1-2) states that the presiding deity of the throw abhi-bhū is Bṛhas-pati, the Brahman of the gods. Vidhura Jātaka (545) relates that the yakkha Puṇṇaka won from king Dhanañjaya of the Kurus his kattā called Vidhura.[94] It is not just a coincidence that Vidhura was the son of the Brahmin called Candra (moon god).[95]

*The rabbi crop of chanas is still sown with a plough. One person drives the plough and the other follows it dropping the chanas in the opened up furrows.

The auspicious function of distributing the communal product among the tribal members (bhāga-dugha) later merged unrecognisably with the winning throw (abhi-bhū) of dice. It is for this reason that the seemingly meaningless tradition arose among the gamblers of mediaeval India that the word kattā was the sweetest to the ears of all gamblers. The gambler Saṁvāhaka sings in the drama Mṛcchakaṭika (Act II):

As a king who has lost his kingdom is excited by the 'dhakka' noise of the tumult of a festival, the 'kattā' noise of gambling draws a penniless gambler inexorably (to itself).

Kṣattā was one of the main priests who officiated at the horse sacrifice along with Brahman, Hotā, Adhvaryu, and Udgātā. In mantras XXIII.22-31 of Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, these priests: The Brahman with the Mahiṣī (chief queen), the Udgātā with the Vāvātā (favourite queen), the Hotā with the Parivṛktā (discarded queen), and the Kṣattā with the Pālāgalī (Śūdra queen), entered into obscene dialogues short of the actual act of coition, while the Mahiṣī mimed actual intercourse with the slaughtered horse.[96] But the thing that should be noted here is that the Udgātā and the Parivṛktā, the Kṣattā and the Pālāgalī illustrate their obscene discourses with agricultural similae. The ritual leaves enough pointers to conclude that originally it was an occasion on which the sacred marriage between the Kṣatra raṣṭri and the Brahman Kṣattā was consummated to reproduce the matriarchal tribe and nature.

With the Aryan patriarchal theocratic monarchy, the Kṣattā is converted on the one hand into a royal official equivalent to a chamberlain,[97] and on the other hand into a slave. One of the noblest and wisest characters of Mahābhārata, the Kṣattā Vidura, was a Śūdra, produced upon a female slave of Ambikā, the widow of king

Vicitravirya of the Kurus, by the Brahman Vyāsa (I.105.24-30). The sacred union of matriarchy or matrilineality has turned into its opposite; for, instead of producing a Kṣatra, a ruler, it now produces a Kṣattā, a slave!

But, one of the greater paradoxes of ancient Indian history is that Vidura, who lived and died a Kṣattā slave of the patriarchal Kauravas, could become a Brahman Kṣattā of the simantini Kunti to produce on her the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, the priest-king (dharma-rāja) Yudhiṣṭhira. Later myth has tried its best to cover up the 'incongruity' by inventing the story that both were the incarnations of the priest king of the dead, Dharma-rāja Yama (I.106-107, I.22-1-6; XV.27.25-30)!

The Puruṣa of Sāṅkhya philosophy is the periodical Brahman of Prakṛti. A slave was also addressed as puruṣa in ancient times.

The unions (saṁ-yogas): of the universal mother Prakṛti with innumerable puruṣas are based on the sacred marriages that the rāṣṭrī of the matriarchal tribe entered into with her periodical Brahman sacred consorts. Multiplicity of the Puruṣa consorts of Prakṛti is the basic tenet of Sāṅkhya philosophy, as is evidenced in its oldest extant work, namely Sāṅkhya-kārikā (18):

> Since birth, death and the instruments of life (the sensory and motor endowments) are allotted severally; since occupations are not at once universal; and since the three guṇas are different in different cases; – multitude of puruṣas is demonstrated.[98]

Just as the sacred marriages of the Kṣatra with Brahmans were for reproducing the matriarchal tribe and the heir to the matriarchal rule, the saṁyogas of Prakṛti with Puruṣas were for reproducing the world of the Sāṅkhya categories and the heir to the universal rule. In Sāṅkhya, Prakṛti and her whole creation from Buddhi or Mahat downwards are characterised by the three attributes (guṇas), while Puruṣas are devoid of these three attributes (Kārikā 17). It has already been explained that these three attributes were the exclusive characteristic of the Earth Mother and her human representative, the tribal mother. Hence, all the evolutes of Prakṛti are females like herself. At the head of these categories of female rulers of clans and phratries, stands Buddhi or Mahat, the heir to the universal matriarchal rule.

The saṁ-yogas of Prakṛti with Puruṣas, according to Sāṅkhya-kārikā 11, are but 'reconciliations of hostile principles':[99]

> (Unmanifest) Prakṛti and (her) manifest (evolutes) are (made up of) three guṇas (are) non-discriminating, object of common (enjoyment), insentient and prolific, while Puruṣa is (her) opposite (in all these respects, though) similar (in some, e.g., Puruṣa is also eternal and unmanifest).

Eternity of innumerable Puruṣas is a contradiction in terms, sociologically and philosophically. Philosophically it leads to accepting the oligarchic contention of the Jaina philosophy, according to which everything in the world, sentient or insentient, has an eternal soul. Sociologically also it is untenable; because Earth Mother's human representative, the tribal mother, is supposed to be eternal and ever young, while her consorts are periodical and evanescent.

Thus, the saṁ-yogas of Prakṛti and Puruṣas were but ceaseless unities of opposites. The ancients had not failed to note that every phenomenon in this world is a ceaseless unity and struggle of opposites. Mahābhārata says (XIV.12.1):

> Their origin (the opposites within every phenomenon) is (simultaneous and) mutually determined, and thus, nothing is without unity and struggle of opposites (nir-dvandaṁ na upapadyate).

References

1. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vol. XIX, p. 279.
2. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, pp. 82-83.
3. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, III.4-5.
4. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 178.
5. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, III.5-21.
6. *Ibid., Saṁyutta-nikāya-pāli*, VII. 12.12.
7. *Ibid., Khuddaka-nikāya, Thera-gāthā-pāli*, V.3.325-329.
8. Griffith, R., *Hymns of the Rg-veda*, Vol. I, pp. 549-550.
9. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 663.
10. Keith, A.B., *Rig-veda-Brahmaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, p. 343.
11. *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXIII.20.
12. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, pp. 275-276.
13. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 526.1.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, 526.4.
16. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, p. 283.
17. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in Indian Theory of Government*, pp. 1-2.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.
19. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, pp. 374-376.
20. Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokāyata*, p. 159.
21. Ehrehfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, p. 61.
22. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, p. 238.

23. Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Pānini*, p. 65.
24. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, II.39.2.11.
25. *Ibid.*, II.28.
26. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 374-376.
27. Thurston, E., and Rangachari, K., *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. V, pp. 408-411.
28. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-305.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
31. Ehrenfels, O.R., *op. cit.*, p. 61.
32. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 366.
33. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Pārājika-pāli*, IV.2.20-21.
34. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 297-298.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
40. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *op. cit.*, p. 309.
41. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. I, pp. 701-702.
42. Karve, Irawati, *op cit.*, pp. 302-303.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 295, 306, 307.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
48. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 91-92.
49. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, III.6.22.
50. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *Rg-veda* (Marathi trans.), p. 311.
51. Fick, R., *The Social Organisation in North East-India in Buddha's Time*, pp. 79-81.
52. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit., Pāthika-Vagga*, IV.3.21.
53. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. i., p. 447.
54. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 692.
55. Ehrenfels, O.R., *op. cit.*, p. 134.
56. Dange, S.A., *India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*, p. 125.
57. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 148.
58. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 60.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 223-225.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 178.
65. Griffith, R., *op. cit.*, p. 299.
66. Sarup L., *op. cit.*, p. 179.
67. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 223-225; Przyluski, J., *The Sālvas, Indian Studies: Past and Present*, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 57-58.

68. *Ibid.*, *The Udumbaras*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 741-743, 754-756.
69. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, p. 464.
70. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, p. 595.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 749.
72. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I, p. 334.
73. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 304.
74. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 223-225.
75. Karve, Irawati, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-304.
76. Gurdon, P.R.T., *The Khasis*, pp. 87-88; Karve, Iravati, *op. cit.*, p. 416.
77. Thomson, C.R., *The Epic of Gilgamish*, pp. 32-33.
78. Briffault R., *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 25-26.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.
81. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 3-4.
82. Abhyankar, Vasudevshastri, *Vyākarana-mahabhāsya* (Marathi trans.), P. II, p. 185.
83. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 472-473.
84. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.
85. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 653-654.
86. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 107.
87. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIII, p. 16.
88. *Ibid.*, Vol. XLI, pp. 62-63; Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vol. XVIII, p. 120.
89. Hume, R.E., *op. cit.*, p. 84.
90. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. I, p. 126; Chanana, D.R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, pp. 43-44.
91. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, p. 545.
92. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, I.8.38.,
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, p. 321.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
96. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 386-387; Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* (Marathi trans), pp. 396-399.
97. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, p. 120; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 61.
98. Colebrooke, H.T., *The Sāṁkhya-Kārikā*, pp. 57-58.
99. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

9

Sacrifice

What was the stipulated term of the cohabitation of the sacred couple and what happened to the Brahman of the Rāṣṭri after this term was over? For the solution of this problem also we will again have to turn to Kerala.

The sacred consort of the Ṭampu-rāṭṭi of Kerala during the Brahman period, i.e., perior to A.D. 216. was called Rakṣā Puruṣan and his term was three years.[1] Though the account says that he was *elected* by the representatives of the tribe, we have already shown with conclusive evidence that he was *selected* by the Rāṣṭri herself. But the same evidence also disclosed that the sacred marriage, far from being the private affair of the couple, or of the phratries from which the two hailed, was the occasion of a tribal festival. The occasion of confirming and celebrating the sacred marriage of the Ṭampu-rāṭṭi also used to be such a festival, and it was called Māmāṅkam or Mahā-makham, literally meaning great sacrifice. From an account written as far back as A.D. 1793, we find that it was believed that the usage went back to pre-Perumāl times, i.e., the Brahman period:

> Mr. Francis Wrede, writing in the year 1793, gives the following account of the festival: 'This feast is celebrated every twelve years at Terunavaye, near the Pagoda of that place dedicated to the god Sheevan; it lasts for 28 days, and attracts a prodigious concourse of people from all parts of India; it consists in a great many religious rites, military games, comedies, etc., and a splendid fair. The institution of this feast seems to be of the most remote antiquity, at least prior to the Government of the Perumals, who used to preside over it. . . .'[2]

The festival was believed to have been instituted by Paraśurāma. It took place on the banks of the river Periyār, at Tiruṅāvāye, near the temple of god Śiva. It was the greatest national festival of Kerala,[3] and the last of it was held in A.D. 1743.[4]

A festival with us today is just a carnival, and the history of mediaeval or feudal times tells us that it was the occasion on which the greatest trade transactions of that region took place.[5] *It is feudalism that deprived these festivals of the supreme status they held in the life of pre-feudal societies.*

Māmāṅkam was not just a carnival, nor just a trade fair, but the occasion when the tribal assembly of Kerala met. Mediaeval Kerala was governed by a system of three-tiered assemblies:

> . . .Now the three kinds of Kūṭṭams or assemblies. . .are (1) The Kuṭṭams of the Taṟa or village, (2) The Kūṭṭams of the Nāḍu or district, and (3) The Kūṭṭams of all Kerala Malabar. The last, under ordinary circumstances, assembled only once in 12 years, and when the whole Keralam assembled, it did so at Ṭiruṅāvāya, on the banks of the Ponnāni river, on the occasion of the Mahā-Mākham festival. The first, or Kūṭṭam of the Taṟa, the meeting of the villagers, as represented by the Karanavers of families or Taṟavād met to discuss matters of local importance, the second, or the Kūṭṭam of the Nāḍu, the meeting of the representatives of a number of villages which form a district, for the discussion of matters of wider importance, and the third, the Kūṭṭam of all Kerala, for the discussion of affairs of national concern. . . .[5]

Translated into tribal language, these territorial divisions mean: (1) clan assembly, (2) phratry assembly, and (3) tribal assembly. What was the function of the Māmāṅkam tribal assembly?:

> . . .In Kerala, a Vyalavaṭṭam or cycle of Jupiter, a space of twelve years, is a period of great importance. All offices were held only for that period; all tenures of land subsisted only for that period; all transactions, appointments, contracts and tenures had to be renewed at the end of 12 years, all feudal ties were broken at the end of that period, and the Māmāṅkam was the occasion when all parties assembled in solemn conclave at Ṭiruṅāvāye and readjusted all existing relations among themselves. In the early government of Malabar, whether republican or monarchical, the ruler was changed at the end of 12 years. The removal of the reigning incumbent and the installation of the new one was also effected at this national festival with the consent and approval of the entire nation. . . .[6]

In the Brahman period, the three-yearly removal of the incumbent Rakṣā Puruṣan and the confirmation of the new one was apparently performed in such a tribal assembly.

The Atharva-vedic hymn invoking Earth Mother enumerates the various assemblies of the early Vedic peoples (XIII.1.56):

> What phratry (grāma) (assemblies), what vraja or clan (assemblies), what tribal motehall assemblies (sabhā), what periodical tribal gatherings (saṅgramāḥ), tribal war leaders' conclaves (samitayas) are upon the earth – in them may we speak what is gratifying to thee (i.e., Earth).

Taittiriya Saṁhitā (II.1.8.4) explains that momentous laws and

resolutions were made at the periodical or special saṅgrāma gatherings of the whole tribe.[7] We have already seen in the third chapter that these assemblies conducted their business amidst much songing, dancing, and mirth. Atharva-vedic hymn VII.12.2 calls sabhā by the epithet naristā, which also means mirth or sport. Samana was definitely a māmānkam of the early Vedic times. Indrāṇi chants in the Rk X.86.10 that women have been going to the samana since days of old. Kosambi has been already quoted to say that ritual dramas were staged in these samanas.

Samana came to be called samāja in epic times. Rāmāyana says that there can be no samājas in a kingless state (II.67.15), and goes on to say that Ayodhyā was distinguished by samāja festivals (II.101.44). Mahābharata (I.142.3) describes the samāja held in Vāraṇāvata, the city of Paśu-pati. The polyandrous marriage festival of Draupadī in the capital of the Southern Pañcalas is repeatedly called samāja (I.184.28, 186.29, 187.21). Bhima declared that he would exhibit his prowess in the wrestling bouts of the samājas of the Matsyas (IV.2.7). Matsyas held their samāja in honour of the god Brahman and it fell in the month of Āṣāḍha (June-July) (IV.13.14). The law-giver Āpastamba (B.C. 600-300) forbids the study of anuvāka (recital of sections of Vedic literature) during the spring festival falling in Caitra (March-April) and the festival of Indra falling in Āṣāḍha (June-July). The Jaina Ācārāṅga Sūtra gives a valuable list of festivals (maha) prevalent in those days in North India:

> A monk or a nun on a begging-tour should not accept food, &c. in the following cases: when in assemblies (samavāesu), or during offering to the manes, or on a festival of Indra or Skanda or Rudra or Mukunda or demons (bhuta-mahesu) or Yakshas or the snakes, or on a festival in honour of a tomb (thūma-mahesu), or a shrine (ceiya-mahesu), or a tree, or a hill (giri-mahesu), or a cave, or a well, or a tank, or a pond, or a river, or a lake, or the sea, or a mine. . . .[9]

J.C. Jain observes that the festivals of Indra, Skanda, Yakṣas and Bhutas were the most prominent in ancient India:

> The Nisitha cūrni (19, p. 1174) refers to the four great festivals (mahāmaha), viz. Indamaha, Khandamaha, Jakkhamaha and Bhūyamaha, which were celebrated in the full moon days (puṇṇimā) of āsādha, āsoya, kattiya and cetta months successively when people passed their times in eating, drinking, dancing, singing and visiting friends.[10]

Samana or samāja is called samajjā by the Buddhist scriptures. Buddha preached to Siṅgāla, a trader's son, that it was sinful to

participate in samajjās because they contained dancing, singing, playing on instruments, folk-dramas, etc.[11] Mahāvīra and Buddha frowned upon these festivals. Asoka interdicted these samajjās.[12] *Though the reason he put forward was that they led to laxity of morals, history worked through this greatest king of India by legally banning tribal assemblies on their highest levels. Twilight of slavery centuries back had prepared much of the de facto ground for this de jure prohibition. After this, these festivals became just carnivals and trade fairs, of course in those parts of India up to which the long arms of feudal Cakravartins and monarchs could reach.*

We shall begin the investigation of these festivals with the festival of Skanda. Mahābhārata tells us that Skanda was born of the sacred union of the universal mothers (loka-mātarah.III.226.21-23) and the divine Brahman, Agni (III.225.7). The mother goddesses Pārvatī and Durgā are also said to be his mothers. The verb 'skand' means to emit seminal fluid. The word 'skanda' means the bank of a river. All these point to the riparian civilisation of the Sindhus. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary says that the festival in his honour was celebrated on the sixth day of Caitra (March-April), while the Jaina tradition gives the day as the full moon day of Āśvina (September-October). Next comes the festival of Indra. Ādiparva (63.15-27) narrates the origin of this festival. Indra, propitiated by Uparicara, king of the Cedis, gave him a bamboo rod adorned with a garland and bade him plant the bamboo rod in the ground at the beginning of every year and hold a festival in his honour. Indra being the god of rain in the epic times, it was believed that the celebration of this festival would procure timely rain and thereby abundant harvest. Gudhī-pādavā is a vestige of that festival, and it is still celebrated in Maharashtra on the first day of the bright half of Caitra (March-April). A rod, its top covered with a new cloth (preferably woman's sari or blouse), surmounted by a branch of Nimba tree which has burst forth in spring foliage and blossom, and the whole is kept in place by capping the rod by a small metal pot used for drinking purposes.

According to Hari-vaṁśa,[13] formerly the whole of the rainy season (Āṣādha to Kārtika) was devoted to the festival of Indra. The flag of Indra (Indra-dhvaja), hoisted at the beginning of rainy season according to Rāmāyaṇa (IV.16.37), was taken down on the full moon day of Āśvina (September-October):

> (Vālī fell down) mortally wounded (on the earth) as the flag of Indra

hoisted (at the beginning of rainy season) [illegible] down on the earth on the full moon day of Āśvinā.

Harivaṁśa[14] depicts the struggle between Kṛṣṇa, the representative of the non-monarchical oligarchies, and Indra, the representative of the preceding theocratic monarchical order. Indra was worsted and surrendered the last two months (Bhādrapada and Āśvina) of his festival for the festival of mountain (giri-yajña) championed by Kṛṣṇa.[15]

We come across a more faithful account of a festival similar to it in the South Indian epic Silappadikaram. The account is summed up by V.R. Ramchandra Dikshitar as follows:

> ...whole of Canto V of the epic is devoted to a detailed description of the festival of Indra and festivities connected with it.... It was an annual festival lasting for a number of days. It commenced on the full moon day in the month of Cittirai (April), and with it the preliminary worship of the guardian deity who was sent by Indra to help an ancient King of the Puhar line, Mūcukunda. Sacrifices were offered in the five different manrams of the city of Puhār (11.140-4). One feature of the festival was the removal of the drum from the Vajrakōṭṭam to the Airāvada temple, where it was placed on the nape of the elephant sacred to Indra. The bathing ceremony of Indra was the important day of the festival. We hear of the Indradhvajam festival in Sanskrit literature (e.g. Viramitrodaya, Rājanitiprakāśa, pp. 421-33) which can be identified with the ceremony talaikkol in Tamil literature, but there was no actual celebration of Indra's festival....[16]

But, this summing up does not give an adequate idea of the festival. For that we will have to refer to the epic itself. Mādhavī, the gaṇikā of Puhār, was born out of the sacred union of Urvaśi and Jayanta, the son of Indra.[17] She started her career as a gaṇikā by displaying her art in this festival:

> The place of honour on the stage was reserved for the *talaikkol*, a sacred rod made of bamboo.... The *talaikkol* stood as the emblem of Jayanta the Victorious, son of the god Indra, and was the object of a cult in the palace of the royal Chola.... Each time a royal dancer gave a performance, she sprinkled the sacred bamboo with holy water brought in a golden vase and wreathed it with garlands of flowers. It was then carried to the theatre on a huge elephant,....
>
> To the sound of drums and horns, the king, accompanied by the four orders of his ministers, walked round the tall elephant. Then he handed the bamboo to the royal poet, seated alone in a chariot. All then walked through the city in procession, and entering the theatre, brought the sacred *talaikkol* to the place of honour.

Madhavi interpreted first a Vadhuka, a northern dance from the Andhra country, then a variation on a five-fold rhythm. The two forms of the dance were merged into one of captivating loveliness.... The perfection of her dance charmed the king,.... He gave her a wreath of green leaves and eight thousand *kalanju* gold pieces. Such was the gift, fixed by custom, that he presented, the first time they appeared before him, to those dancers worthy of carrying the sacred *talaikkol*.

Deer-eyed Madhavi then ordered her hunchback maid to stand on the main street, where rich merchants pass, and offer them a wreath, saying: 'He who buys this wreath of leaves for a thousand gold-*kalanjus* shall become the master of my mistress, more supple and lithe than a liana.' And on the wreath of leaves was painted the portrait of Madhavi, the lotus-eyed.

It was Kovalan who bought the wreath, and, following the maid, entered Madhavi's apartment...he took her in his arms....[18]

The festival of talaikkol was originally the sacred marriage of the human representatives of the mother goddess Urvaśi and her sacred consort Jayanta. A significant ancient tradition about Vasiṣṭha, the non-Aryan prototype of a Brahman priest, advances our enquiry nearer to our objective. The law-giver Manu (IX.23), who is supposed to have flourished between the second century B.C. to second century A.D., states: 'Akshamālā, a woman of the lowest birth being united to Vasishṭha....'[19] The commentators explain that 'Akshamalā or Arundhatī was a Cāṇḍālī (Gov., Rāgh.), and became, as the Śruti states (Rāgh.), with the permission of the Ṛishis, the wife of the sage Vasishṭha....'[20] Hemacandra also identified Akṣamālā with Arundhatī.[21] The tradition is confirmed also from Buddhist sources. The great Buddhist poet Asva-ghoṣa (first century A.D.) relates in his Buddha-carita (IV.77):

> Impelled by the desire of copulating with the despised Mātangī Aksamala, the sage Vasiṣṭha produced on her a son called Kapinjala-ada (eater of a bird called kapinjala).

Though Mātaṅga and Cāṇḍāla had come to denote the lowest caste in the Hindu caste society in the later Vedic period itself, both the words in their feminine gender are the synonyms of mother goddesses Parvati and Durgā respectively.[22] Saṁyutta-nikāya-pāli (47.19) calls a bamboo 'candāla-vaṁsa', and an acrobat who plays on it as 'caṇḍāla-vaṁsika'. Hence, Caṇḍāli must have been the mother goddess of the sacred grove of bamboos. The festival of Indra and the Talaikkol of the Tamils must have been originally the festivals of Caṇḍāli or Mātaṅgi, for the sacred bamboo was carried ceremoniously on a Mātaṅga (elephant).

Akṣamālā has a remarkable history behind it:

> ...A brahmacāri or a householder who has consecrated sacred fires should mutter the Gāyatri 108 times, while a *vānaprastha* and *yati* should repeat it more than 1000 times.... Brhat-Parāśara V.p.85 and Laghu-Vyāsa (Jivananda Part II, p. 375) contain similar provisions (as Śaṅkha-smṛti, chap. XII) about akṣamālā counting of japa. They add 'Indrākṣa' to the different kinds of beads. The rosary should have 108 beads (this is the best) or 54 (middling) or 27 (this is the lowest number of beads in a rosary). Kālidāsa (in his Raghuvaṁśa XI.66) mentions that the hero Paraśurāma had on his right ear a rosary of akṣa seeds....[23]

As already explained, akṣa or die also meant a clan lot in the tribal rāṣṭra land, and that the total clans in the five-phratried non-Aryan tribe descended from Nirṛti were 107 (8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, 12 Adityas, 13 Viśve-devas and 63 Maruts). Akṣa-mālā containing 108 akṣas is but a symbolic representation of a matriarchal tribe and its rāṣṭra land containing respectively 107 or 108 clans and clan lots, and is also another name of devi Nirṛti. It is quite natural that the mightiest hero of matriarchy, the Brahman Paraśurāma, should adorn himself with such an akṣa-mālā.

Vasiṣṭha was the son of Urvaśī according to Ṛk VII.33.11:

> O Vasiṣṭha, you are a son of Mitra and Varuṇa. O Brahman, you were born from (the sacred marriage of) the moon god* and Urvaśī. You are a drop that fell in divine fervour. (The phratry of) Viśve-devas raised thee on (the banks of) a lotus pond.

The prototype of the divine brahman *priest* was Vṛtra, the son of Tvaṣṭr, and as already noted, he was killed by Indra as a result of which he came to be denounced by all as a 'Brahma-han', a Brahman-killer. According to Rāmāyaṇa (VII.86.8), the gods performed the horse sacrifice in order to rid Indra of the curse of Brahman-killing. It means that a horse sacrifice served the same purpose which was accomplished by a Māmānkam: removal of the incumbent Brahman and installation of the new one. Just as a Māmānkam was a periodical tribal assembly of the ancient Kerala-putras where momentous laws and resolutions were made, periodical sacrificial sessions like horse sacrifices and royal consecrations (Rāja-sūya) were occasions of tribal assemblies called 'pariṣads', where momentous 'samayas' were made. Just as a Māmānkam was held on the banks of a river and beside a

*The Puruṣa-sukta (X.90.13) says that the moon was born from the mind of the universal Puruṣa.

temple of Śiva, these two varieties of great sacrifices were invariably performed on the banks of a river or a pond, and the presiding deity of a horse sacrifice, according to Rāmāyaṇa (VII.87-11-13), was Rudra. When king Daśaratha decided to perform his horse sacrifice on the northern bank of the river Śarayū (I.12.12), he bade his minister Sumantra to invite all the people belonging to the four castes of the Kosala country (I.13.20). The festival rang with the cries, 'serve food, give clothes!' (I.14.14). It was here that the sacred union of the Brahman Ṛṣyaśṛṅga with the queens Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and Kaikeyī took place. Rāma chose the Naimiṣa grove on the bank of the river Gomatī as a site for his horse sacrifice (VII.91.15). He bade Sītā take the vow of faithfulness before the whole pariṣad of the Kosalas (VII.95.6). Bhīma mapped out a teak grove (śāla-caya) outside Hastinapura (most probably on the banks of the river Sarasvati) for the horse sacrifice of the Pāṇḍavas (XIV.85.12). People of all orders of the Kuru country flocked to the sacrifice (XIV.89.26). It was a great festival which ceaselessly resounded day and night with the shouts 'give, eat!' (XIV.89.43). This sacrifice of the Pāṇḍavas was held for expiating the sin of the great massacre of kinsmen that had taken place on the Kuru-kṣetra.

As for the three-yearly term of Brahman-ship in ancient Kerala, we have the evidence of a similar duration in the case of Purūravas, though, as we have already observed, male kingship arose with Purūravas himself. Urvaśī told him in the Ṛk X.95.16 that she cohabited with him for four Autumns. This three- or four-year cycle arose out of the productive needs of the ancient agricultural societies. Primitive man everywhere in the world abided by the lunar year which consists of 354 days. But when he took to agriculture, he had to adapt his lunar year to the solar year of 365 days, for agriculture exclusively depends on the seasons generated by the sun. This adjustment consists in adding an intercalary month or months after a certain number of years. The earliest effort to bridge the discrepancy between the two years can be traced in the Ṛk I.25.8 by which the seer Śunaḥśepa Ajigarti invokes Varuṇa as the knower of the thirteenth intercalary month:

> True to his holy law, he knows the twelve months of one year, and also the month of later birth.

Atharva-vedic hymn XIII.3.8 gives a clearer evidence of intercalation:

8. He who measures out the thirteenth month, fabricated (*nimā*) of days and-nights, having thirty members,. . .[24]

'Buying of Soma' was an important rite in these great sacrificial sessions. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (I.12) declares:

. . .Him (Soma) from the thirteenth month they bought, therefore the thirteenth month is not known; . . .[25]

From this it can be inferred that these great sacrifices were performed in a leap year. Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā's mantra XXII.31 invokes the deities of the following thirteen Vedic months: (1) Madhu, (2) Mādhava, (3) Śukra, (4) Śuci, (5) Nabhas, (6) Nabhasya, (7) Īṣa, (8) Ūrja, (9) Sahas, (10) Sahasya, (11) Tapas, (12) Tapasya, and (13) Aṁhasas-pati. Aṁhasas-pati is called the month of Dhondyā in Marathi, the word meaning stone. It is to this Dhondyā that appeals are made by Maharashtrian peasants when there is a failure of rain. Indian lunar calendar adds this thirteenth month every fourth year.[26] Bhiṣma told Duryodhana in Virāṭa-parva (52.4), that an intercalary month is added every fifth year.

The horse sacrifice began by releasing the best and the most auspicious horse on the full moon day of Caitra (March-April) to wander at will over the 'earth' followed by the sacrificer's armed guards. According to Rāmāyaṇa (I.13.1) and Mahābhārata (XIV.72.4), the sacrificer was consecrated for the sacrifice after exactly one year, i.e., on the next full moon day of Caitra, on which day the sacrificial horse had also to be brought back safely from his victorious march over 'the face of the earth'. The sacrifice could not take place if the horse was lost, or stolen, or restrained successfully by anybody. But, it is pertinent to note that these rites are of later innovation; for the ritual as described by both the schools of Yujur-veda, black as well as white, do not contain them. The 'viniyoga' (ritual directive) of Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā enjoins that the sacrifice proper should commence by binding the horse by grass ropes.[27] The Viniyoga of Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā's mantra XXII. 5 directs that the horse should be led to a lake for sprinkling it with water.[28] The viniyoga for mantra XXIII.7 further lays down that a chariot with four horses yoked to it should be taken to that lake.[29] This clearly denotes that the sacrifice was performed near a lotus pond or puṣkara.

As in the Rk I.162.21, the mantra XXIII.16 of Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā assures the horse before slaughter, 'O horse, though we are killing you, you are not going to die, but you will be going to heaven by the path of gods!. . . .'

With the mantra XXIII.18, the four queens, namely Mahiṣi, Vāvātā, Parivṛktā, and Pālāgalī, are led to the slaughtered horse, and on their way to him, they address each other, 'O Amba, O Ambikā, O Ambālikā, nobody is taking me to the horse, (but I am going voluntarily). (If I do not go to him), that wicked one will sleep with that Subhadrikā who dwells in the city of Kāmpilya!' With the first half of the mantra XXIII.19, all the queens circumambulate the horse three times, the middle one being in the reverse manner as is done in the funeral ceremony (pitṛ-karma). The Mahiṣi then 'sleeps with' the horse and the queens invoke him, 'We call upon you, (O horse)! You are gaṇa-pati of the tribes; you are priya-pati of the dear ones (kinsmen); you are nidhi-pati of all the treasures! O treasure incarnate, be my consort! I attract your semen in me, and you also pour it in me!'

The Mahiṣi and the horse are then covered with a cloth, after which she chants the next mantra inserting the membrum virile of the horse in her womb, '(O horse!) let both of us spread wide both of our laps. Let the virile semen-bestower, discharge his semen (in my womb).'

Keith and Eggeling have fought shy of giving a faithful and complete rendering of these and some further hymns impelled by modern ideas of decency and propriety. For example, Eggeling translates a further mantra thus:

4. The Adhvaryu then addresses the maiden, 'Hey, hey maiden, that little bird. . . .' The maiden replies to him, 'Adhvaryu! that little bird . . .'[31]

Translated from Pathak's Marathi rendering, the same mantra appears as follows:

Pointing at the maiden's womb the Adhvaryu asks her, 'When the male organ enters in that small bird-like womb of yours which makes 'halahala' sound when you walk fast and it makes 'galgala' sound when profuse discharge of semen is taking place in it.'[32]

The maiden answers the Adhvaryu in the same words, excepting the change of gender and generative organ. Similar dialogues take place between Brahman and Mahiṣi, Udgātā and Vāvātā, Hotā and Parivṛktā, and Kṣattā and Pālāgalī.[33] After these dialogues are over, the Mahiṣi rises from beside the horse.[34]

Now, who is this horse? Rks I.163.3-4 invoke the horse as follows:

You have become identified with Soma. It is said you have *three bonds* in heaven that hold thee.

It is said that there are *three bonds* that bind you in heaven, *three* in the waters, and *three* within the ocean.

Rk I.164.35 declares that the prolific semen of the horse is Soma himself. Hence, the sacrificial horse is the moon god, and the three Ambās (Ambā, Ambikā, and Ambālikā), who mime copulation with the horse, are the three forms of the Earth Mother to whom belong the 'three bonds'.

The name Su-bhadrā of the city of Kāmpilya leads us to a strange story in Mahābhārata (I.120). King Vyuṣita-aśva of the Bāhlikas died childless after performing a horse sacrifice. His queen Bhadrā Kākṣivatī wished to obtain issues by him. Hence (I.120-36):

O bull of the Bharatas, then the Devī copulated with his (Vyuṣita-aśva's) corpse and gave birth to three Śālvas and four Madras.

It means that the three phratries of the Śālva tribe and the four phratries of the Madra tribe were descended from Devī Bhadrā of the Bāhlikas. The account of the constituents of the Śālva tribal confederation has been preserved by the grammatical literature: 'Udumbara, Tilakhala, Madrakāra, Yugandhara, Bhūliṅga and Śaradaṇḍa, such are the divisions (avayava) of Śālva.'[35]

It also means that the sacred marriage not only reproduced, but also multiplied the tribe.

This story makes it clear beyond any doubt that the human representative of the Earth Mother originally copulated with the corpse of her sacred consort, and the horse was only a later substitution. Kāmpilya, though the capital of the Northern Pañcalas, seems geographically to have been a part of the Bāhlika country.

The story of the horse sacrifice performed by Ilā, the queen of the matriarchal Bāhlikas, as told by Rāmāyaṇa (VII.87-90), sheds more light on the ritual. Once on a time, Ila, the king of the Bāhlikas, went hunting in the month of *Caitra* in his favourite forest accompanied by his army and servants. In the heat of the sport he trespassed into the sacred grove of the mother goddess Umā, who was dallying with her divine consort Rudra, also attired in female apparel to please her. There, everything, from trees to animals, were females. As soon as Ila stepped into the sacred precincts, he found that he, along with his retinue, had beern transformed into women. Finding Rudra to be powerless to lift the curse of Umā, he resorted to her; but she told

him that he, along with his retinue, would resume their male forms after every alternate month and with each metamorphosis would not remember the previous month's gender. Thus, Ila became Ila, and started living in the forest with her retinue. Wandering in the forest she encountered Budha, the son of Soma, on the banks of a *lake*. Struck by her beauty, Budha made enquiries about her with her retinue. He was told that she was their mistress and without a husband. Solicited by him, Ila, who was already attracted by him, told him that she was her own master (kama-carī) and she was completely at his disposal. They started cohabiting with each other starting with the month of Vaisakha (May-June). She addressed him as 'Brahman' (VII.89.16-17). After nine months (either in Māgha or Phālguna) she gave birth to a son by name Pururavas. Budha, the account goes on to say, performed a horse sacrifice in order to restore Ila to complete malehood, and according to the ritual, it must have started with the full moon day of Caitra. Rudra, propitiated by the sacrifice, restored complete malehood to Ilā. The male Ila then left the Bāhlika country and became the ruler of the Kasi country where he was succeeded by Pururavas. No mention of Budha is made in the finale of the story.

The following facts emerge from the story which have vital bearing on the point under consideration: (1) Ilā was the queen of the matriarchal Bahlikas; (2) Umā was the mother goddess of the Bahlika tribe, whose human representative Ilā was; (3) Ilā took as her Brahman sacred consort Budha, a human representative of the moon god in the month of Vaisakha, with whom she cohabited for three years; (4) The sacred marriage of Ksatra Ila and Brahman Budha was not meant for producing a male heir to the matriarchal rule, for Pururavas later left his mother's country and went to become a sacred consort of Devī Urvasī of the Kasis, and hence, the union was meant to produce a female heir; (5) At the end of three years, Budha was sacrificed.

Later, Pururavas was sacrificed in a similar ritual in Pratisthana after a four-yearly sacred consortship with Uravasī, the ruler of the matriarchal Kāśis. She assured him by the Rks X.95.15, 18 in the same manner as sacrificial victims all the world over were assured, and as the surrogate horse later came to be assured:

'O Pururavas, thou art not to die, not to drop (dead), the unholy wolves are not to eat thee. . . .'

'Thus speak these gods to thee, son of Ilā: inasmuch as thou art doomed to death, thy offspring will offer sacrifice to the gods, but thou thyself rejoice in heaven.'[36]

In what manner and who sacrificed the Brahman sacred consort? Ramayaṇa (I.14.33) depicts the Mahisī Kausalyā performing the act herself, though on the surrogate horse:

> Then Kausalya, circumambulating the horse, slaughtered him with great joy by three swords.

Urvaśī also was a Kausalyā (a daughter of the Kosala tribe); Ambā, who successfully fulfilled her vow of killing Bhiṣma, was also a Kausalyā.

How is it that the sequel of the sacred 'love' of a woman is slaughter of her sacred consort by her, and that too 'with great joy'? Kausalyā was a civilised woman, the mother of Rāma, but still she is seen slaughtering the horse and miming copulation with him, not without elation. If Kausalyā did this with the desire of progeny, it will not be illogical to conclude that the devis of matriarchal tribes slaughtered their human consorts actuated by the sacred desire of reproducing their respective tribes and nature.

The benefits accruing from horse sacrifice are enumerated by Rks I.162.5, 22 of the Rg-vedic Sūkta, devoted to horse sacrifice:

> Brahman, Hotr, Adhvaryu, Āvayā, Agnimindha, Gravagrabha, Prastōtr (and other nine priests) consummate this sacrifice in such a manner that the rivers may overflow their banks.
>
> May this steed bring us all-sustaining riches, wealth in good kine, good horses, manly offspring.[37]

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa elaborates:

> 9. 'May a hero be born unto this sacrificer!' on the sacrificer's family he thereby bestows manly vigour, whence of old a hero was born to him who had performed the (Aśva-medha) sacrifice.
>
> 10. 'May Parjanya rain for us whensoever we list!' where they perform this sacrifice, there Parjanya, indeed, rains whenever they list! – 'may our fruit-barley plants ripen!' – There the fruit-barley plants indeed ripen where they perform the sacrifice. . . .[38]

King Daśaratha declared that horse sacrifice would confer on him progeny (I.12.9).

Soma, the moon god, whom the sacrificial horse represented, was the symbol of vegetation. Rks 18, 19, 22 of the Rg-vedic hymn X.97 invoking plants call Soma again and again the king of plants. Soma, the divine consort of Earth Mother, dies to be born again as her son, in the form of vegetation. On the human plane, primitive man believed that the virility of the Brahman sacred consort of their Kṣatra devī not

only fertilised her, but also the Earth Mother whom she represented. If the virility weakened, they feared that their devī as well as the Earth Mother would cease to bear fruit, and as a result their tribe and nature would perish. Earth (after cultivation) exhausted its fertility after three to four years; intercalation had to be resorted to after every three to four years, and hence the virility of a Brahman was believed to last for three years. After that he had to die in order that the tribe and nature may live and multiply. But, by this sacrificial death, he was believed to be born in a more glorious form; like the moon he resurrected himself. That is why Indrāṇī boasts in Rk X.86.11 that her husband does not die of old age.

Thomson explains:

> If the king began as a mere royal consort of the royal women, it becomes possible to understand what to modern minds is the most puzzling of his primitive characteristics. It is again to Frazer that we are indebted for the discovery that his tenure of office was limited in early times to a prescribed period, at the end of which he was put to death. When we consider the marital customs of those African queens, who treat their consorts as slaves, because they *are* slaves, we can see that in these conditions the king's death was only an incident in a woman's ritual cycle. Among the Shilluks of the Sudan, who killed their kings within living memory, the princesses enjoyed the same rights of free love, and in former days they used to strangle the king with their own hands.
>
> It was necessary for these 'queens' to conceive in order that the earth might bear fruit. Their sexual life was a cycle of mimetic magic. Accordingly, the procreator was imagined as a god – in the first instance, no doubt, the god of the moon, which in primitive thought is the cause of pregnancy in women and fertility in the soil; and after serving their purpose the men in whom this god was embodied were put to death. They had to die in order that the crops might live. This ritual, inspired the myths of Ishtar and Tammuz, Isis and Osiris, Venus and Osiris, . . .[39]

Buddha taught love (mettā) towards all. Saints of the Bhakti movement in India visualised the salvation of the individual and the world in 'love'. The path of love which originated with the Sufis in the Arab countries, entered India with the Arabs and ran side by side with the Bhakti path. Some Indian votaries of love, e.g., the sect of Vallabha, went to the extent of declaring that not men, but only women are capable of genuine love, and hence they dressed and behaved like women. But, love is neither eternal, nor the manifestation of the divine as it was made out to be by the philosophers and saints, and even by some scientists.[40] *But, these ideas of universal love which transcend the Chinese walls of the tribal and slave societies, belong to*

the feudal era proper. In pre-feudal societies, love and other tender feelings were circumscribed by the limitations of tribal institutions and in slavery by class or caste institutions in the tribal framework itself. Anyone not belonging to the tribe or to the ruling class or caste in the tribal framework, was regarded an object of hartred and on whom the utmost cruelty could be wreaked without any compunction.

But a Brahman was invariably selected from the same tribe in contradistinction to the periodical priest-king who hailed from an alien tribe. A sacrificial victim in other parts of the world also was originally chosen from the same tribe.[41] In the Anu-gitā (XIV.28.12) a Yati told an Adhvaryu Brahmin who was sacrificing a he-goat:

(Śruti says) 'O Sacrificial victim! In this respect you should secure the consent of your brethren, father, mother and friends.' (According to this Śruti) you should secure the consent of the parents of especially this victim who is going to be sacrificed by you.

Though the adhyaya is an interpolation, it reflects an ancient reality.

It is because a kinsman was sacrificed as a Brahman, that a kinsman came to be called a 'vīra'. A person who dies an unnatural death is still commemorated as a 'vīra' in Maharashtra. A wooden or a planklike stone slab is planted in the ground on which is engraved in relief a horse-rider holding a sword in his hand and the figure surmounted by a full moon and a crescent. The wooden or stone pillar is ceremoniously carried to its destination in a festive procession which includes newly married couples and is headed by a Bhagat (shaman), who, waving a naked sword in his hand, dances in a frenzy, shouting: 'vīro, vīro'! In the folk-songs of Mālavā the word 'bīra' (vīra) is the exclusive epithet by which a sister calls her brother.[42] The Gujarati word 'vīro' means brother.

It is in this context that Urvaśī called Pururavas in Rk X.95.5 her 'vīra'. Here the word not only means a 'hero' but it also denotes that Pururavas had been adopted into the Kāśi-Kosala tribe, i.e., into kinship, by his initiation to Brahmanhood. Rg-vedic hymn X.18 describes the funeral ceremony of such a 'vīra'. It chants:

13. I stay the earth from thee, while over thee I place this piece of earth. May I be free from injury.

Here let the Fathers keep this pillar (sthūṇam) firm for thee and there let Yama make thee an abiding place.[43]

Rk 8 of the same hymn chants:

Rise, come unto this world of life, O woman; come, he is lifeless by whose side you are lying. O mother (jani), the (new sacred) consort (devara) who has taken you by the hand, is ready to become your husband.[44]

The twin gods Aśvins are called 'devaras' by Rk X.40.2:

Where are you at night, where during the day? O Aśvins, where do you get your necessary things, where do you dwell? Who puts you to bed in a dwelling place as a widow a husband's brother (devaram); and a bride a bride-groom?[45]

The seer of this hymn is Brahma-vādinī Ghoṣā Kākṣivatī. It is not improbable for her to have belonged to the same tribe which was headed by Bhadrā Kakṣivatī, i.e., the Śālva-Madras. The words yoṣā and martya are incorrectly translated as bride and bridegroom respectively. Yoṣā is rendered by Nirukta (III.15) as '...Yoṣā (a woman) is derived from (the root) *yu* (to join...).'[46] Durga explains the word as a woman who unites herself with a man.[47] Martya means mortal. Hence, though vidhavā has come to mean a widow, both the words, vidhavā, and yoṣā, mean a brahmavādinī, a tribal mother, who is unrestricted in her sexual behaviour. Devara, though it has invariably come to mean the younger brother of a woman's husband, also meant in those days 'a second husband', i.e., the younger brother of a woman's husband who was entitled to take her as his wife after the demise of his elder brother. But Nirukta gives another derivation of the word which we have already referred to in explaining the derivation of the word 'devī'.[48] Devara originally meant not a dicer in the literal sense of the term, but a Brahman sacred consort of the devī of a matriarchal tribe. That is why a gambler came to be called a 'śva-ghnī', self-destroyer.[49]

Such a ritual suicide used to be committed by the Perumals, the twelve-yearly royal consorts of the rāṭṭis of ancient Kerala:

*Amara-kosa (II.803) gives kitava (gambler) and mātula (maternal uncle) as the synonyms of the Dhattūrā white thorn apple, an ebrieting or poisonous fruit.

. . .Early records show that the rulers brought their career at a tragic end at a jubilee they celebrated at the end of the 12th year of their reign. Though the strange custom seems to have died out some time before the advent of the Portuguese, we have description of it left by early travellers. . . Purchas. . .gives an account of the festival at which the king of the country brings his career to a close by publicly cutting his own throat. Barbosa says: 'And in the province of Quilacare there is a gentile house of prayer, in which there is an idol, which they hold in great account, and every 12 years they celebrate a great feast to it, whither the gentiles go as to a Jubilee. This temple possesses many lands and much revenue: it is a great affair. This province has a king over it, who has not more than 12 years to reign from Jubilee to Jubilee. . .when the 12 years are completed, on the day of this feast, there assemble together innumerable people, and much money is spent in giving food to Brahmans. The king has a wooden scaffolding made, spread over with silken hangings and on that day he goes to bathe at a tank with great ceremonies and sound of music, after which he comes to the idol and prays to it and mounts to the scaffolding, and there, before all the people, he takes some very sharp knives, and begins to cut off his nose, and then his ears and his lips, and all his members, and as much flesh off himself as he can, and he throws it away very hurriedly until so much of his blood is spilled that he begins to faint, and then he cuts off his throat himself. And he performs this sacrifice to the idol, and whoever desires to reign other 12 years and undertake this martyrdom for love of the idol, has to be present looking on at this: and from that place they raise him up as king.'[50]

Ritual suicide was still in vogue in Mahāvira's time. As already explained, Mahāvira hailed from the Videha tribe of the Vajji confederation. His father Siddhārtha was the phratriarch (jñātṛ) of the Kāśyapa phratry of the Videha tribe and his mother Triśalā was the sister of Ceḍaga, phratriarch of the Vāsiṣṭha phratry of the Videha tribe and also known as the king of Vaiśālī, the capital of the Vajji confederation. Both the parents of Mahavira, according to Ācaraṅga sūtra, committed ritual suicide.[51] According to Rāmayaṇa (I.71.3-4), the dynasty of the Janaka priest-kings of Videha, started with Mithi, while his father Nimi is said to have been a non-Janaka king of the Videhas. It means that before Mithi the Videhas lived in a Brahman period. In this respect the Brahminic and non-Brahminic traditions tally in a surprising manner. Makhādeva sutta of Majjhima nikāya-pāli sheds valuable light on this Brahman period of the Videhas. Makhādeva was the first dhamma-rājā (literally priest king) of Mithilā, the capital of the Videhas. He bade his barber that as soon as he espied a single white strand in his hair, he should pull it out and place it on the palm of Makhādeva. The ebbing youth of Makhādeva soon gave the barber an opportunity to fulfil his command, and presenting the white strand to him, the barber said, 'Your Majesty, your divine messengers have presented themselves; white hairs are to be seen in your head.' Makhādeva, handing over the kingdom to his son, bade him do the same as soon as his youth waned and warned him that otherwise he would be the last in the illustrious line of dhamma-rajas. Abdicating thus his kingdom, Makhadeva entered Amba-vana, shaved off his hair, donned red robes and 'went out of the world' (pabbaji). This tradition was faithfully kept up by all his descendants up to Nimi. But Nimi's son Kālāra-Janaka broke the tradition, and stuck to his kingdom even after the appearance of the divine messengers in his head, and thus with him ended the line of dhamma-rājās.

Amba-vana here is invariably taken in the sense of a mango grove. But it has already been shown that it really meant the sacred grove of the mother. The location of this Amba-vana of Mithilā tallies exactly with that of the sacred grove of Ahalyā described by Ramāyaṇa (I.48.11).

The compound Makhā-deva literally means 'sacrificial god', or simply a divine sacrificial victim. Pabbaji is derived from the root pra + vraj, and it is taken to mean 'to renounce the world', but literally means 'to go out of the world or life', to sacrifice oneself. Makhādeva, after the ebbing of his virility (virya), went into the sacred grove of the Earth Mother Ahalya, and was sacrificed, most probably by Ahalyā herself. As the Brahman of Ahalyā belonged to the Gotama clan, Makhādeva and the Brahmans who succeeded him up to Nimi must have belonged to the same clan.

The 'ritual' of capital punishment was exactly modelled after this sacrifice of the Brahman in matriarchy.[52] Relating to his quarrelling bhikkhus the beautiful story of prince Dighavu (Sanskrit Dirgha-ayu) of Kosala, with whose reign the Kāśis and Kosalas were united into one kingdom, Buddha described the capital punishment enforced by king Brahma-datta of the Kāśis on the parents of Dighāvu as follows:

'Then, O Bhikkhus, king Brahmadatta of Kāsi gave order to his attendants: "Well, my friends, bind king Dighiti of Kosala and his consort (sa pajāpatiko) firmly with strong ropes, tie their arms to their backs, have them close shaven, lead them around with loud beatings of drums from road to road and from crossway to crossway, and lead them out of the town by the southern gate, hew them to four pieces to the south of the town, and throw the pieces away to the four quarters."'[53]

Cross-roads was the place where oblations to the mother goddesses were offered. Cārudatta requested his friend Maitreya to go to the cross-roads and offer the oblations to the mother goddesses.[54] The law-givers enjoin that oblations to Nirrti should be offered on the cross-roads.[55] Kosambi observes:

> . . .The crossways were, from the stone age, places where the Mothers were normally worshipped by savages whose nomad tracks met at the junction. The food-*bali* replaces their blood-sacrifices, particularly on dark-sixth and no-moon nights. . . .[56]

The Sanskrit drama Mṛcchakaṭika gives a vivid description of a sentenced man being led out to the place of execution. The condemned Cārudatta describes himself (Act X):

> My whole body stamped with the hand-prints of red sandal paste and sprinkled with rice grains, red powder, etc., though a man, I have been transformed into a sacrificial victim.
>
> My neck bearing a garland of red Karavira-flowers, my shoulders carrying the impaling stake and my heart being dragged by the anguish, I am following the executioners as a he-goat is led by the slaughtering priests to the sacrifice.

When the sword fell down from the hand of a Cāṇḍāla executioner, he appealed to the mother goddess Durgā-to have mercy on him. The in the same manner as Cārudatta, when on the point of being sacrificed to Karālā Durgā by the Kāpālika Aghora-ghaṇṭa and his female disciple Kapāla-kuṇḍalā (Act V). She was marked by similar symbols of a sacrificial victim: smeared with red sap, bearing a red garland, and attired in red robes. It means that not only the Cāṇḍāla executioners, or for that matter all common people of India, were the devotees of the mother goddess Durgā, but that human victims were offered to her, so much so that a criminal sentenced to death also was considered her sacred victim.

Why was the sacrificial victim, the Puruṣa Brahman, in whose image the criminal sentenced to death was attired and decked, painted in red? The moon god, whose human representative the Puruṣa Brahman was, is also called Sākṣin, meaning witness, by Mahābhārata (III.76.34). The mortal sākṣin, who was called upon to give his verdict in a boundary dispute, is enjoined by Manu (VIII.256) to undergo the following preparatory ritual:

> 256. Let them, putting earth on their heads, wearing chaplets (of red flowers) and red dresses, being sworn each by (the rewards for) his meritorious deeds, settle (the boundary) in accordance with the truth.[57]

The moon died to be born again. His human representative, the Puruṣa Brahman, also died to be born again. Red is the colour of death and regeneration.

That is why the sacred marriage, wherein this drama of death and life was enacted, was characterised by red colour, and ordinary marriage, being the product of the sacred marriage, has also come to be characterised by that colour. When Cārudatta was saved by the sudden appearance of his beloved, the gaṇikā Vasanta-senā, he exclaimed:

> These splendid red robes and this red garland have been transformed into a bride-groom's (red clothes and red garland) by the coming of my beloved, and these sounds that are produced by the drums beaten at the time of death punishment, have been turned (by you) into the (auspicious) music of drums (played at the time) of marriage!

In the sequel of the drama Cārudatta is made king of Kuśāvatī by Āryyaka, who has become king of Ujjayinī after slaughtering king Pālaka in the sacrificial hall, and Cārudatta is shown taking the gaṇikā Vasantasenā as wife. A pseudo-sacrificial slaughter of Cārudatta turns into a sacred marriage!

It is in this background that the seemingly incongruous lamentation that finds its place in the Atharva-vedic marriage hymn XIV.2 can be properly understood:

> 59. If these phratries with loosened hair (keśino janāḥ) have danced together in your house, doing evil with wailing-from that sin let Agni and Savitṛ release you.
>
> 60. If this daughter of yours has wailed with loosened hair (vikeśā) in your house, doing evil with wailing – from that sin etc. etc.
>
> 61. If phratry-sisters (jāmayaḥ), if young women have danced together in your house, doing evil with wailing – from that sin etc. etc.

The custom of a phratry assembling to wail with loosened hair over the death of its ordinary member is met with in the Pali canon Majjhima-nikāya.[58] According to Morgan, all the phratries of a tribe assembled for the funeral of a clan chief called Sachem.[59]

Buddha was called their phratry-chief (ñāti-seṭṭho) by the Śākya oligarchs.[60] He was so to the other sangha-gaṇas, being the head of a 'saṅgha' of ascetics. That is why all the oligarchs of the Malla saṅgha-gaṇa, in whose sacred teak grove Buddha died, set up a great

lamentation, dishevelling their hair, as soon as they were informed of the decease by Ananda.[61]

It was believed that the 'soul' of the departed took some stipulated time to reach the other world. The American tribals believed the period to be ten days and on the eleventh day they held a feast.[62] In Maharashtra the kinsmen of a dead person perform a ritual called 'gandha-mukta' on the eleventh day, which consists of applying red paste to the forehead of all the assembled kinsmen, denoting that the wordly ties with the deceased are now severed. Next day a feast is held.

Great festivities used to take place during the funeral ceremonies of a tribal chief in ancient India, the whole tribe singing and dancing to the tune of music for several days at a stretch:

25. Then the Mallas of Kusinārā gave orders to their attendants, saying, 'Gather together perfumes and garlands, and all the music in Kusinārā!'

26. And the Mallas of Kusinārā took the perfumes and garlands, and all the musical instruments, and five hundred suits of apparel, and went to the Upavattana, to the Sāla Grove of the Mallas, where the body of the Blessed One lay. There they past the day in paying honour, reverence, respect, and homage to the remains of the Blessed One with dancing, and hymns, and music, and with garlands and perfumes; and in making canopies of their garments, and preparing decoration wreaths to hang thereon.

27. Then the Mallas of Kusinārā thought:

'It is much too late to burn the body of the Blessed One to-day. Let us now perform the cremation to-morrow.' And in paying honour, reverence, respect, and hymns, and music, and with garlands and perfumes, and in making canopies of their garments, and preparing decoration wreaths to hang thereon, they past the second day too, and then the third day, and the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth day also.[63]

It seems that there was some difference in the mode of cremating a chief of a clan or phratry and a priest-king (Cakka-vatti):

28. Then on the seventh day the Mallas of Kusinārā thought:

'Let us carry the body of the Blessed One, by the South and outside, to a spot on the south, and outside of the city, – paying it honour, and reverence, and respect, and homage, with dance and song and music, with garlands and perfumes, – and there, to the south of the city, let us perform the cremation ceremony!'

29. And thereupon eight chieftains among the Mallas bathed their heads, and clad themselves in new garments with the intention of bearing the body of the Blessed One. And behold, they could not lift it up!

30. Then the Mallas of Kusinārā said to the venerable Anuruddha: 'What, Lord, can be the reason, what can be the cause that eight chieftains of the Mallas who have bathed their heads, and clad themselves in new garments with the intention of bearing the body of the Blessed One, are unable to lift it up?'

'It is because you, O Vāseṭṭhas, have one purpose, and the spirits (devatā) have another purpose.'

31. 'But what, Lord, is the purpose of the spirits?'

'Your purpose, O Vāseṭṭhas, is this. Let us carry the body of the Blessed One, by the south and outside, to a spot on the south, and outside the city, – paying it honour, and reverence, and respect, and homage, with dance and song and music, with garlands and perfumes, – and there, to the south of the city, let us perform the cremation ceremony. But the purpose of the spirits, Vāseṭṭhas, is this. Let us carry the body of the Blessed One by the north to the north of the city, and entering the city by the north gate, let us bring it through the midst of the city into the midst thereof. And going out again by the eastern gate, – paying honour and reverence, and respect, and homage to the body of the Blessed One, with heavenly dance, and song, and music, and garlands, and perfumes, – let us carry it to the shrine (cetiya) of the Mallas called Makuṭa-bandhana, to the east of the city, and there let us perform the cremation ceremony –'

'Even according to the purpose of the spirits, so, Lord, let it be!'[64]

The non-monarchical oligarchs had forgotten the ritual of cremating a priest-king; for Ānanda had to remind them of it:

33. Then the Mallas of Kusinārā said to the venerable Ānanda: 'What should be done, Lord, with the remains of the Tathāgata?'

'As men treat the remains of a king of kings (rañño cakka-vattissa), so, Vāseṭṭhas, should they treat the remains of a Tathāgata.'

'And how, Lord, do they treat the remains of a king of kings?'

'They wrap the body of a king of kings, Vāseṭṭhas, in a new cloth. When that is done they wrap it in cotton wool. When that is done they wrap it in a new cloth, and so on till they have wrapped the body in five hundred successive layers of both kinds. Then they place the body in an oil vessel of iron, and cover that close up with another oil vessel of iron. They then build a funeral pile of all kinds of perfumes, and burn the body of the king of kings. This, Vāseṭṭhas, is the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings.

'And as they treat the remains of a king of kings, so, Vāseṭṭhas, should they treat the remains of the Tathāgata. At the four cross roads a dagaba (thūpam) should be erected to the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall there place garlands or perfumes or paint, or make salutation there, or become in its presence calm in heart – that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy.'[65]

Why were the Mallas bidden to take the body of Buddha to the Makuṭa-bandhana Caitya which was to the east of Kusinārā? For that we will have to arrive at a proper understanding of the role that the institution of caitya played in the life of Indian tribal society. One of the seven conditions of welfare of the Vajjis was:

. . .So long as they (Vajjis) honour and esteem and revere and support the

Vajjian shrines (cetiyāni) in town and country, and allow not the proper offerings as formerly given and done, to fall into desuetude. . .so long may the Vajjians be expected not to decline, but to prosper.[66]

Buddhaghosa explains 'cetiyāni' as 'Yakkha-cetiyāni'.[67] Who were these Yakkhas (Sanskrit Yakṣa)? Entering Cāpāla Cetiya of Vesāli, Buddha exultingly told Ānanda: 'How delightful a spot, Ānanda, is Vesāli, and the Udena Cetiya, and the Sattambaka Cetiya, and the Bahuputta Cetiya, and the Sārandada Cetiya,* and the Cāpāla Cetiya.'[68] Nārāyaṇa, the commentator of Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra, gives the etymology of caitya as 'citte bhava' and explains:

'If a person makes a vow to a certain deity, saying, 'If I obtain such and such a desire, I shall offer to thee an Ājya-sacrifice, or a Sthālipāka, or an animal – and if he obtains what he had wished for and performs that sacrifice to that deity: this is a Caitya sacrifice.'[69]

The bali was to be offered accompanied by the chanting of the Ṛk V.5.10, which is a Ṛk addressed to the sacrificial post (yūpa) from an Āprī hymn. These hymns were chanted when fire was to be carried round the sacrificial victim before it was to be slaughtered. The same ritual was observed when the Brahman Śunahśepa was to be sacrificed to Varuṇa in place of prince Rohita, son of king Hariś-candra of the Ikṣvākus, who had agreed to offer his son Rohita as a 'caitya sacrifice'.[70] A custom exactly similar to caitya sacrifice is still in much vogue in Maharashtrian countryside. It is called 'mānatā', and the word is derived in the same manner – 'manasi bhava'. Mānatā sacrifices are invariably offered to mother goddesses, and the victim is a goat or a sheep. Bahu-putta caitya of Vaiśālī evidently denotes that it must have been a shrine devoted to a mother goddess who made childless women prolific. Satta-ambaka means 'of seven mothers', and hence it was a shrine of seven mothers. Makuṭa-bandhana Caitya was such a Caitya. Literally it means a shrine where a crown is put on ceremoniously. It was a shrine where once on a time the initiation of the Brahman or priest-king consorts of Malla Rāṣṭrīs must have taken place. Śīlavati, the Mahiṣī and Dharma-naṭī of the Mallas in the Kusa Jātaka (531), was such a Rāṣṭrī. Her son Kusa urged her to govern the country in his absence, though he had a younger brother called Jayam-pati:

*According to the commentator, it was a temple dedicated to the Yakṣa Sārandada.[68]

This is your rāṣtra, wealthy, fulfiller of all desires and endowed with elephants and five royal insignias. Govern this country, O mother! I am going where my beloved Pabhāvatī is.[71]

Mahā-sudassana, the priest-king consort of Devī Subhaddā of the Mallas of Kusāvatī (Kusinārā), breathed his last when he met Subhaddā for the second time, apparently a case of ritual suicide.[72] That is why Sāṅkhya-kārikā (61) says:

Nobody is more delicate than Prakṛti, such is my conviction. Thinking – 'I have been seen' – she does not expose herself again to the view of the Puruṣa.

The ritually sacrificed Brahman was also mourned because he represented the crop that is 'slaughtered' by a sickle.[73] 'O my Rāma!' is the refrain of the dirge in the communal lamentation of a woman in the Khandesh region of Maharaṣhtra who has lost her husband. According to Nirukta (XII.13), Rāmā is a maiden of the dark race who is only fit for enjoyment and not for any sacred purpose. Ramā is the name of a mother goddess, and it will not be incorrect to assume that Ramā and Rāmā were synonymous. Hence, it is not improbable that Rāma originally was the divine Brahman consort of the Rāṣtri Rāmā or Ramā.

Now, why did the Mahiṣī or triune Ambā mime copulation with the slaughtered horse, originally her sacred Brahman consort? Both the questions are answered by the following passage of Aitareya Brāhamaṇa (II.8):

The gods slew man (Puruṣam) as the victim (pasum). When he had been slain his sap (medha) went out; it entered the horse, therefore the horse became fit for the sacrifice, and him whose sap had departed they dismissed; he became a monkey. They slew the horse; it went away from the horse when slain; it entered the ox; therefore the ox became fit for sacrifice, and it whose sap had departed they dismissed; it became a Gauramṛga. They slew the ox; it departed from the ox when slain; it entered the sheep, therefore the sheep became fit for sacrifice, and it whose sap had departed they dismissed; it became the Gayal. They slew the sheep; it departed from the sheep when slain; it entered the goat; therefore the goat became fit for sacrifice, and it whose sap had departed they dismissed; it became the camel. It dwelt for the longest time in the goat; therefore the goat is of these animals the most often employed. They slew the goat; it departed from the goat when slain; it entered this (earth); therefore (this earth) became fit for sacrifice, and it whose sap had departed they dismissed; it became a Śarabha. These animals whose sap is departed are unfit for sacrifice; therefore, one should not eat of them. It (medha) they followed in this (earth); it, followed, became rice. . . .[74]

It was in order to absorb the sap (medha) of her Puruṣa Brahman

consort or his surrogate horse that the Mahiṣī or the triune Ambā mimed copulation with the corpse. The passage also discloses clearly how the human victim was substituted by various animal victims. The medha (virility) of the Puruṣa Brahman victim or his surrogate horse made the tribal mother prolific by restoring her exhausted fertility, and the medha also went to fertilise the Earth Mother in order to produce food crops like rice. It was clearly agricultural magic.

It was exactly with this belief that the Khonds of Orissa offered human sacrifices, and when the British tried to suppress this custom, they rose in a revolt in 1846. The human victim was called 'maria'. (A mother goddess in Maharashtra is called Marī-āī.) He was purchased from another tribe or people, treated with the utmost respect due to a sacred victim and everyone of his wishes was fulfilled with alacrity. On the day prescribed he was sacrificed in the following manner:

> The Zanee (the priest) then cuts a piece of flesh from the body and buries it with ceremony near the effigy and village idol, as an offering to the earth. All the rest afterwards go through the same form, and carry the bloody prize to their villages, where the same rites are performed, part being interred near the village idol and little bits on the boundaries. The head and face remain untouched, and the bones, when bare, are buried with them in the pit. Women, dressed in male attire and armed as men, then drink, dance and sing round the spot. . . .

The singing and dancing started before the sacrifice:

> Famine stares us in the face,
> Parched are our fields, and dry,
> Thadi Penno veils her face,
> Propitiate me, she cries.
> That where'er its (victim's) blood is shed,
> On land, or field, or hill
> There the gen'ous grain may spring,
> So ye may eat your fill.[75]

The priest was significantly called 'jani', meaning mother. The function belonged originally to the tribal mother who represented the earth mother, and to the earth mother herself the Brahman Maria was offered. It again was agricultural magic.

But how is it that the chief queen of the king, who mimed coition with the sacrificed horse, came to be called Mahiṣī, meaning she-buffalo, when she should have been called Vaḍavā (mare), though the name of a Brahma-vādinī called Vaḍavā Prātitheyī has come down to us?[76] And, if she represented the Earth Mother, why did she not receive the epithet Gauḥ (cow), which, according to Nighaṇṭu (I.1.1),

is one of the synonyms of earth? For that we will have to turn to the Indus civilisation itself.

A three-headed deity with buffalo horns sprouting on the head is shown by an Indus seal as sitting naked on a wooden stool.[77] The stool reminds us of the Khadira stool-throne on which the consecrated king was made to sit by the priests in the Rāja-sūya sacrifice.[78] The buffalo-horned three heads is evidently a mask. Though nearly extinct now, folk-dramas called Lalita were very popular in Maharashtrian countryside. They used to be staged in fairs, vestiges of ancient samanas and samājas. Masked players used to enact epic or mythological tales. The Kathakali dance of South India is Lalita developed to high artistic excellence. The account given by Varthema of the sowing festival in Kerala, called 'vappa-maṅgala' in Buddha's time, reveals that masked performances were essentially agricultural magic:

> Varthema gives us a curious description of 'the practice they followed in sowing rice.' He says, 'The men of Calicut when they wish to sow rice, observe this practice. First they plough the land with oxen, as we do, and, when they sow rice in the field, they have all the instruments of the city continually sounding and making merry. They also have ten to twelve men clothed like devils, and these unite in making great rejoicing with the players on the instruments, in order that the devil may make the rice very productive.'[79]

The land concerned was temple land (Devaswam) and not privately owned.[80] It has already been explained that Devaswam lands formerly belonged to the tribe and not to a handful of trustees. Ancient societies performed masked dramas of the death and resurrection of their agricultural deities like the Greek Dionysius,[81] the Egyptian Ittis and *Osiris*,[82] and the Babylonian Tammuz and Ishtar (Astarte).[83] Frazer gives many instances of masked performances of tribal peoples all over the world to prove that they were magical rites for promoting agriculture. As already pointed out, another Indus seal which depicts a sacrifice shows the sacrificers wearing masks of birds, worshipping the goddess standing in a ficus religiosa tree wearing a three pointed crown. It has already been shown that she is Nirṛti. In the Ṛk X.114.3 Nirṛti is depicted as flanked by 'two birds of mighty power', evidently priests wearing bird's masks.

The quality of having three guṇas or attributes belongs to Prakṛti and her female evolutes, while Puruṣas are devoid of this characteristic. Hence, three-headedness in male deities is a borrowed

attribute, and not their original one. This vital fact is lost sight of by many scholars. Hence, three-headedness of the Indus deity is also a borrowed characteristic. But what of the horns, buffalo or otherwise? The Babylonian mother goddess Astarte was called horned Astarte.[84] The Egyptian mother goddess Isis was also horned.[85] Osiris, brother and husband of Isis, being a priest-king, borrowed her horned crown:

> In art Osiris is sometimes represented as a human-headed mummy grasping in his hands his characteristic emblems and wearing on his head, instead of his usual crown, a full moon with a crescent.[86]

Sachem was the most important functionary of the American tribe of Senecas, and only a Sachem could be elected to head their tribe.[87] The symbol of his office was a horned crown. On the death of a Sachem 'the horns' were deposited on his grave and remained there until a new Sachem was elected to succeed him, on which occasion 'the horns' were taken away from the grave and placed upon the head of the successor.[88] The successor was not the son of the deceased Sachem, but his sister's son.[89] The matrilineality of Sachemship itself denotes that originally the Sachemship and the horned crown belonged to woman. Moses, the chief of the Biblical Hebrews, is shown by Michaelangelo in his world-famous statue as wearing horns on his head. It is because horns originally belonged to woman that 'cuckolds were said to wear horns on their brows'.[90]

Indra called himself a bull with sharpened horns in Rk X.48.10. Though the epithet is used figuratively for Indra, Brahmaṇas-pati, according to Rk X.135.2, actually wore a horned crown. Siddheswarshastri Chitrav says that horn-headedness was the attribute that essentially belonged to Brahmaṇas-pati.[91] As Brahmaṇas-pati or Bṛhas-pati was the divine consort of the Rāṣṭrī Vāk according to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (I.19), the horned crown originally belonged to her in the fitness of things.

The buffalo god Mhasobā is a prominent agricultural deity of Maharashtra.[92] The famous composition in high relief at Māmallapuram, hewn out of a solid cliff, depicts the slaying of the buffalo demon Mahiṣa-asura by the mother goddess Durgā.[93] But, it is singificant to note that the so-called demon is wearing a sacred thread and a royal umbrella is held over his head. Who was this Mahiṣa-asura?

The ritual slaughter of a male buffalo on Dasarā or Vijayā-daśamī, which falls on the tenth day of the bright half of Āśvina (September-October), was till recently one of the most popular festivals of

Maharashtra. Dasarā means the tenth night (daśa-rātra), or the culminating day of Nava-rātra. Vijayā is one of the names of the mother goddess Durgā. It is a ten days' festival of Durgā.

Nava-rātra or nine nights preceding Vijayā-daśamī, are exclusively a *married* woman's affair. The first day of Nava-rātra is the day of ghata-sthāpanā, meaning the establishing of the earthern pot. Women procure a new earthern pot, fill it with water, close its mouth with a coconut, and place it on a layer of black earth brought especially from the field. Few grains of wheat are sown broadcast in that layer of loose earth surrounding the pot. Water keeps seeping through the porous pot and irrigates the 'wheat field'. The pot is filled once a day by pouring water over the coconut, and the process is kept up for nine days. An earthern lamp is kept burning ceaselessly for these nine days. Women who 'establish the pot' observe a vrata with a fast, breaking it on the tenth day. The soil containing the burgeoning wheat is gathered and placed in a basket along with the pot, and thrown in the adjoining river. The coconut in broken, and the 'prasāda' distributed to everybody present

The 'Alūnā' (salt-less) ritual, observed also exclusively by females, though virgins, during 'Gaurī-pūjā' days (June) in Gujarat, is similar in every respect to Nava-rātra, excepting that rice is sown broadcast instead of wheat.[94] Gaurī is a name of mother goddess Umā or Pārvati or Earth.

Wheat might have been a later substitution for rice, for wheat is not mentioned in the Gāthā Sapta-śatī of Hāla. The ritual of sowing grains in the soil wetted by the water in the earthern pot and consigning the sprouts to the river, preserves intact the vanished reality of the agricultural system of the ancient riparian civilisation. Alūnā is the impregnation of the eternal virgin Durgā or the Earth Mother, and Nava-rātra is her fructification.

Male buffalo fights used to take place on Dasarā. The winning buffalo was led in festive procession up to the gate of the village, decked in exactly the same manner as Cārudatta and Mālatī, and slaughtered there. Rk X.60.3 might be referring to king Asamāti Rathaprauṣṭha of the Ikṣvāku clan as a slaughterer of buffaloes in this context.

The law-giver Āpastamba opines that the flesh of a buffalo is more meritorious than even that of a cow:

> 26. Beef satisfies (the Manes) for a year.
> 27. Buffalo's (meat) for a longer (time) than that.[95]

W. Robertson Smith has already been quoted to say that the sacrificial animals were originally treated as kinsmen.[96] In killing a he-buffalo the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills treated it as a kinsman.[97]

As the sacrificed horse was roasted and eaten by the tribe (Rk I.162.12), the buffalo slaughtered on Vijaya-daśami, as already shown, was also roasted and eaten by the villagers. And as the horse was slaughtered by the triune Ambā, the buffalo also was slaughtered by her. That is why Durgā is also called the killer of the buffalo demon (Mahiṣa-asura-nāśinī),[98] and thus her human representative came to be called Mahiṣī.

Mahiṣa-ānanā and Mahiṣa-dā were mother goddesses who were attendants of the god Skanda.[99] The people of Karnataka were called Māhiṣakas* in epic times, and Karna condemned them as non-Brahminical, by which he meant that they were either matriarchal or matrilineal (VIII.44.13). Māhiṣakas were also a matriarchal people who lived on the banks of the Narmadā, and their capital was Māhiṣmatī. It should be noted that Durgā belonged to this region, for she is called Vindhya-vāsinī by Mahābhārata (IV.6.17). The unrestricted sexual behaviour of this country has already been alluded to. The daughter of king Nīla of Māhiṣmatī mated only with god Agni (II.31.27-34). Anuśāsana-parva (2.12-32) narrates another version of the same story. In this version the name of Nīla is given as Duryodhana. He became the sacred consort of the river goddess Narmadā. The fruit of the sacred marriage was a daughter called Sudarśanā. The account specifically says that she was the only offspring of king Duryodhana. She married nobody except the fire god Agni. Agni is the purohita Brahman of the gods. Hence, it clearly means that Sudarśanā also took temporary Brahman consorts like her mother Narmadā. One of the names of Durgā being Vindhya-vāsinī, Narmadā is but one of her forms and epithets. Thus, Māhiṣakas were ruled by Mahiṣis like Sudarśanā who were the human representatives of the river goddess Narmadā who in turn was but a form of the earth goddess Durgā. It appears from Bhava-bhūti's drama Mālatī-Mādhava that as late as the dramatist's time (A.D. 700) human sacrifices were openly offered to Durgā by her Kāpālika sect of devotees. Bhavabhūti was a native of Vidarbha, a part of Maharashtra, and in ancient times it must have formed a part of the Māhiṣaka country. The story of Mālatī-Mādhava unfolds in this very

*V.V. Mirashi has established that Māhiṣaka was made up of the Medaka and Raichur districts of Andhra and the Vijapur district of Karnataka in his article in Navbharat, Aug. 1979.

Māhiṣaka complex. Hence, the conclusion becomes inescapable that the Mahiṣī of the Māhiṣakas like Sudarśanā sacrificed Brahman consorts after a stipulated period in the temple of Durgā, copulated with the corpse, and absorbing the medha, reproduced her tribe and nature.

The Brahman himself did not 'die'. Through the passing of his medha into the Earth Mother via the mahiṣī, he was resurrected in the form of the life-giving corpse. This great drama of death and resurrection is best illustrated by the mystery of Osiris, the brother-consort of the Egyptian mother goddess Isis.[100] As the corpses of seeds sent forth shoots of corn, the coffined corpse of the slaughtered god burst into a crop of grain:

> . . .These (series of bas reliefs at Denderah) exhibit in a series of scenes the dead god lying swathed as a mummy on his bier, then gradually raising himself up higher and higher, until at last he has entirely quitted the bier and is seen erect between the guardian wings of the faithful (wife) Isis, who stands behind him, while a male figure holds up before his eyes the crux ansata, the Egyptian symbol of life. . .in the great temple of Isis at Phila. . .we see the dead body of Osiris with stalks of corn springing from it, while a priest waters the stalks from a pitcher which he holds in his hand. The accompanying inscription sets forth that 'this is the form of him whom we may not name, Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the returning waters'. Taken together, the picture and the words seem to leave no doubt that Osiris was here conceived and represented as a personification of the corn which springs from the fields after they have been fertilised by the innundation. This, according to the inscription, was the kernel of the mysteries, the innermost secret revealed to the initiated. So in the rites of Demeter* at Eleusis a reaped ear of corn was exhibited to the worshippers as the central mystery of their religion. We can now fully understand why at the great festival of sowing in the month of Kholak the priests used to bury effigies of Osiris made of earth and corn. When these effigies were taken up again at the end of a year or of a shorter interval, the corn would be found to have sprouted from the body of Osiris, and this sprouting of the grain would be held as an omen, or rather as the cause, of the growth of the crops. The corn-god. . .died that they might live. . . .[101]

The Durgā and Mahiṣa-asura ritual and myth belongs to the epic times, and hence it may be objected that it is not Vedic. But, rituals usually are far more ancient than the period in which they are recorded for the first time. Nevertheless, we have fortunately the means to prove that the ritual under consideration is of hoary antiquity. For that we will have to investigate the Asura phenomenon. Who were these Asuras? Examining representative postulations of various scholars, Chattopadhyaya states:

*The Greek earth goddess.

'On the top of Mount Meru,' said Sayana, 'lies the city of Amaravati, wherein the gods dwell, and beneath Meru lies Iravati, the city of the *asuras*'.... The archaeologist's spade has really unearthed the ruins of an ancient city by the bank of Iravati, which on the evidence of *Rigveda*, we are strongly inclined to look as the city of the *asuras*. This city is known to us as Harappa.

In the sixth *Mandals* of *Rig Veda* we come across a description of Indra's campaign against the Asuras. Indra was called there *asuraghna*, the killer of the *asuras*. This description of Indra is not uncommon in the Vedic literatures. The *Atharva Veda*, the *Satapatha Brahmana*, the *Grihya Sutras*, and even the *Upaniṣads* remembered him as the destroyer of the *asuras*.

Now in *Rig Veda* Vi.27 we come across certain proper names. One of them is Varasikha. Indra was described as destroying him along with his descendants.... The context suggests that Indra did it in the role of *asuraghna*, that is as the destroyer of the *asuras*. It is from this point of view, therefore, that Sayana was fully justified in explaining Varasikha as the name of a certain *asura*.

...If Varasikha and others were but *asuras*, their city was presumably the city of the *asuras*. The name of this city, according to *Rig-veda* was *Hariyupiya*. Scholars today are strongly inclined to identify Hariyupiya of the *Rig Veda* as the Harappa of the Indus Valley....

Therefore, there are grounds to believe that at least in some cases the word *asura* meant the authors of the Indus civilisation....[102]

Bhagavad-gita gives the world outlook of the Asuras as follows (XVI.8):

> They (Asuras) assert that the world originates without (the authorship of) a god, (for) it needs no such substratum, (as everything in) it evolves from non-being (into being); it originates from the union of the female and the male, and hence, how can it be sustained by any other objective except sexual desire?[103]

Surprisingly enough this is the way of life of the Kāpālika materialists, the votaries of Durgā. We have already demonstrated at length that this also was the ideology and the way of life of the pre-Aryan or non-Brahminic matriarchal and matrilineal peoples of ancient and mediaeval India. But to call the Indus people Asuras is one of the misconceptions of Indian history. If the pre-Aryans, or rather the enemies of the Aryans, were Asuras, how is it that even Aryan gods, such as Indra, Agni, etc., came to be called Asuras?

In order to arrive at a correct definition of Asura, we will have to turn to Nighaṇṭu. It (I.10.29) renders Asura along with gotra as a synonym of cloud. Asuratva or the quality of being Asura, according to Rg-veda III.55.9 and Atharva-veda XVIII.1.5, belonged pre-eminently to the non-Aryan god Tvaṣṭr.

The divine impregnator, omniformed Tvaṣṭr, generated and nourished manifold mankind. All these created beings and the asuratva of the gods are solely his.

His son is Tvāṣṭra, Vṛtra, the Brahman of Asuras and Suras (gods). Explaining Vṛtra's synonym cloud, Nirukta (II.16) says:

> ...But who is Vṛtra? 'It is a cloud', say the etymologists. ['It is a demon (Asura), son of Tvaṣṭā,' say the legendarians.]....[104]

Indra was called Brahma-han and Asura-ghna. Hence, both the words are synonymous, and thus the words Brahman and Asura denote the same function – that of the periodical consortship of the Devi of the matriarchal tribe.

It is but natural that Varuṇa, who produced upon Urvaśi the first human Brahman priest known to us, i.e., Vasiṣṭha, should be invoked by the epithet Asura more often than the Aryan gods like Indra, Agni, etc. All the great Asuras like Bali, Naraka, Prahlāda, etc. and the tribes of the non-Aryan Daityas and Dānavas, sat in the divine mote-hall (sabhā) of Varuṇa.[105]

Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā (XXIV.28), enumerating the deities of the animals and birds that are to be sacrificed in the horse sacrifice, states that Varuṇa is the deity of three buffaloes. According to Nighaṇṭu (III.3.8), mahiṣa is a synonym of mahat, meaning great, along with ambhṛṇa (III.3.16). As ambhṛṇa became Āmbhṛṇī to denote the Rāṣṭrī and Devi Vāk, Mahiṣa also became Mahiṣi to denote the same function.

Mahābhārata (I.66.54) says that Nirṛti was one of the wives of Varuṇa, and the demons (Rākṣasas) she generated became known as Nairṛtas. When the Pāṇḍavas started on their way to serve their period of banishment, their priest Dhaumya threw darbha grass in the south-westerly direction of Nirṛti and chanted the hymns invoking Yama, the god of death (I.80.22). Yama is the priest-king (dharma-rāja) of the manes, and as the institution of priest-kingship was preceded by the institution of Brahmans who were servile periodical consorts of the Rāṣṭrī-devī, the divine Dharma-rāja must also have been preceded by the divine Dharma-naṭī. Hence, the direction of the cemetery originally must have been in the south-westerly direction; i.e., Nairṛtya, the direction of devī Nirṛti.

The postulation is confirmed by one of the names of Durgā. She is called Nairṛti, meaning the daughter of Nirṛti; the epithet also denoting the direction south-west.[106] The Kāpālikī Kapāla-kuṇḍalā in

Bhavabhūti's drama Mālatī-Mādhava (Act V) informs us that the shrine of Karālā Durgā was adjoining and on the way to the cemetery. The temple evidently was situated to the south-west of the city of Padmāvatī, capital of a country lying on the southern bank of the river Indus and in the modern Mālavā. The temple of the goddess Ek-virā at Dule in Maharashtra is also on the way to and adjoining the cemetery of the town. A cemetery is also called pitṛvana, meaning the sacred grove of the manes.[107] Naked, unbound hair wafting weirdly, bearing garland and ornaments of human skulls and bones, Durgā herself lives not in the temple, but in the cemetery, in company with the multiformed tribe of the dead. Her tribal retinue is called 'Kaṭa-pūtanas' by the drama Mālatī-Mādhava (Act V). The real meaning of the word kaṭa has eluded even the great grammarian Patañjali. He takes it to mean a mat. We shall have occasion to discuss the full implications of this word later on. In the compound kaṭa-pūtanā, kaṭa means cemetery,[108] or the sacred field of the goddess Durgā, and Pūtanā means corpse or a kind of Rākṣasis, who, as we have already seen, were non-Aryan matriarchs. It was a matriarchal tribe! Thus, in this sacred field and grove, surrounded by her matriarchal tribe of the dead, Durgā, the mahā-nagnī (the great naked one), dallied with her divine consorts, the eleven Rudras. *The goddess of life lived in death! The diametrically opposite phenomena of life and death were in inseparable unity and arose out of each other according to primitive man.*

As far Śiva or Rudra, Kosambi observes:

> ...We find a naked three-faced god on Mohenjodaro seals...who might be a proto-type of the modern Śiva; but that deity wears buffalo horns on his head-dress. It cannot be a mere accident that the pastoral buffalo-god Mhasobā is also identified with the Mahiṣāsura whom the goddess Pārvatī crushes to gain her title Mahiṣāsura-mardinī.... Pārvatī as Yogeśvarī is at times married to an equivalent of Mhasobā who begins to resemble a diluted form of Śiva-bhairava. It will cast some light upon the Kālighāṭ painting and other icons where Pārvatī as Kālī tramples...upon Śiva's prostrate body, presumably his corpse; that he comes to life again under her vivifying tread is obviously a mitigating addition to the undeniable conflict....[109]

This postulation of Śiva is confirmed by another meaning of kaṭa. It is one of the epithets of Śiva, and kaṭa also means corpse![110] The identity of Śiva-Rudra with Mahiṣa-asura becomes more conclusive from the meaning of the two words; mahiṣa and asura, compounding the name. It literally means the sacred Brahman Asura consort of the Mahiṣī. Thus, from a corpse (kaṭa), so rendered by Nairṛtī Durgā, the

Mahiṣa-asura Rudra Śiva is reborn representing the regeneration of nature.

More light is shed on the point under consideration by the myth regarding the first day of Dipa-āvalī – the festival of lamps. The day is called Naraka-caturdaśī which falls on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Āśvina (September-October). Tradition says that Naraka-asura was beheaded on this day by Kṛṣṇa. Who was Naraka-asura?

Though Nara-ka later came to mean hell, it literally means 'of the Nara tribe or of the janapada Nara'.[111] Nara also means earth, for Nirṛti is also called Naraka-devī.[112] This etymology is confirmed by Mahābhārata (II.38), which calls Naraka-asura by his other epithets Bhauma-asura (son of Bhūmī or earth) and Nairṛta (son of Nirṛti). He ruled the city of Prāg-jyotiṣa, capital of Kāma-rūpa, identified with modern Assam. But, it should be noted that not only Naraka-asura, but all his Nara-ka people are called Nairṛtas. As Nirṛti was the primal mother goddess of the Indus civilisation, the Nairṛtas cannot be placed in Assam, but only in the Indus valley. Hence, the killing of Naraka-asura cannot be imputed to Kṛṣṇa, an epic hero, but to Nirṛti herself. He was the Brahman Asura sacred consort of the priestess of the Earth Mother and he was sacrificed by her on Naraka-caturdaśī.

Naraka-caṭurdaśī is succeeded by the new moon day of Āśvina. On the amā-vāsya, the day of the coition of the earth and the moon, Nirṛti's devi priestess mimed copulation with the corpse of the slaughtered Asura Brahman, and later with his surrogate, a slaughtered male buffalo.

The next day is the first day of bright half of Kārtika (October-November) called Bali-pratipadā. Its significance has already been explained in the fourth chapter. It is the day on which dice was ritually played, and hence it is the very day on which apportionment of rāṣṭra tribal land by lot-drawing took place. Though the word bali means the Asura king of that name, it also means share. With the Asura Bali the pre-Aryan institution of agricultural and matrilineal priest-kingship came to an end; for he was pushed down by Vāmana, an incarnation of god Viṣṇu, in the nether world, also called the world of the serpents (Nāga-loka). Strangely enough, the Vidhura Jātaka records that Varuṇa was the king of this nether serpent world.[113] Hence, it accords well with the fact already noted, that these Asura priest-kings were the members of the celestial mote-hall (sabhā) of Varuṇa, which further denotes that Varuṇa himself was the last of the pre-Aryan divine Asura priest-kings. But, the matrilineal Varuṇa kingship was taken

over by the Aryans and turned into its opposite, patriarchal Indra kingship, which point shall be dealt with fully in Chapter 11.

Puruṣa is another name for the Asura Brahman consort of the Rāṣṭri-devī. The famous Puruṣa hymn (X.90) of Ṛg-veda is but the actual sacrifice of the Puruṣa Brahman performed in order to reproduce the tribe and nature:

The Puruṣa has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet; wooing the Earth (goddess) in all manner, still he stands ten fingers away from her.

The Puruṣa is all that is, all that has been, and all that is to be. He is the lord of immortality, and waxes virile by food.

Such is his power, and more than that is the Puruṣa. All the beings are but his fourth part, while his immortal three quarters are in the heaven.

From (Puruṣa) Vi-rāṭ* was born, and from Vi-rāt Puruṣa. Once born he generated the earth and then her city.

When the gods cultivated (atanvata) the sacrifice by offering in it the Puruṣa as oblation, the Spring was the (ritual) ghee, Summer the fuel and Autumn the offering.

They be-sprinkled the sacrifice – the Puruṣa born in the beginning – on the sacred seat. With the Puruṣa as their sacrificial animal** the gods, the Sādhyas and the sages accomplished their sacrifice.

When the Puruṣa, who combines in himself all the oblations, was sacrificed, there arose the butter (medha). From the butter (semen virile) arose the animals of the air, forest and village.

When the Puruṣa, who combines in himself all the oblations, was sacrificed, there arose (from his semen virile) the Ṛk and Sāma hymns. Also were born the Atharvan hymns and the Yajus hymns.

From (his semen virile) were generated horses and all the beasts with two rows of teeth. Also were born the cattle and goats and sheep.

When they dismembered the Puruṣa, in what manner did they visualise every one of his parts? What came of his mouth, what of his arms, what of his thighs, what of his feet?

The Brahman (phratry, Varṇa) was his mouth, from his arms was fashioned the Rājanya (phratry), his thighs became (the rest of the phratries of the tribe or) the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra (tribe of slaves) arose out of his feet.

From his mind was generated the moon and his eyes gave birth to the sun. Indra and Agni arose out of his mouth and the wind from his breath.

The mid-world arose out of his navel, and the sky from his head; the Earth

*Vi-rāṭ means primal matter or Prakṛti[114] and in Sānkhya it is Buddhi or Mahat. For, Artha-śāstra (II.43) calls a young gaṇikā 'saubhāgyavatī (prosperity-bestowing or with husband) and an old gaṇikā as one devoid of it (saubhāgya-bhaṅga). Compare Ṛks 7 and 5 with the Atharva-vedic hymn VIII.10.1:

"1. Virāj verily was this (universe) in the beginning; of her when born everything was afraid, (thinking) "this one indeed will become this (universe)".'[115]

**Sāyaṇa comments – Tena Puruṣa-rūpeṇa puśunā ayajanta.

evolved out of his feet, and the quarters from his ears. Thus were generated the worlds.

Seven days were the sacrificial stake (to which he was tied) and twelve months and five seasons were the fuel-faggots. The Puruṣa thus was bound as a sacrificial animal in the sacrifice "cultivated' by the gods.

Thus was the sacrifice accomplished with the sacrifice (=Puruṣa). For such were the primal dharmas. With it the great ones (fathers) attained heavens, for the gods in those bygone days were (our forefathers) Sādhyas themselves.

It is pertinent to note that this is the Aryan version of the Puruṣa-medha, that with them came to mean simply human sacrifice, which later developed into the gory human sacrifices described at length by the Yajur-veda, Brāhmaṇas and the epics. The Puruṣa here is no more the periodical consort of the Earth Mother. The meaning of Vi-rāṭ was so absolutely effaced, that it came to be supposed that it was an epithet of Puruṣa himself! The real meaning of the word can be restored only by referring to the non-Aryan Atharva-veda. Its hymn VIII.9, invoking Vi-rāṭ, chants in the very first Ṛk:

1. Whence were these two born? Which side (*ardha*) was that? Out of what world? Out of which earth? The two young (*vatsa*) of the virāj rose out of the sea (salila); of those I ask thee: by whether (of them was) she milked?[116]

Ṛk 11 of the Sukta calls her 'janitrī' and Ṛk 13 extolls her as triune. Vi-rāṭ here is clearly the universal rāṣṭrī-devī. It is she who gives birth to the pair. Who is this pair? The etymology of the word Puruṣa given by Nirukta (I.13) clearly denotes that it originaly denoted a city-dweller: '...Puruṣa (man) should take the form of puri-śaya (city-dweller)....'[117] Mahābhārata elaborates philosophically on this etymology of Puruṣa (XIV.36.1-2):

When Prakṛti is in a state of equilibrium of her three attributes, she is called unmanifested. Then she is in her primal state of all-pervasive tranquility. With the breakdown of this equilibrium through these three attributes are generated the five primary elements out of which arises this city (human body) having nine gates.

In this city are the eleven (sense and motor) organs which impel the Purusa towards enjoyment through the agency of the mind, it being the supreme among all these organs. Buddhi (discriminating intellect) is the mistress of this city.

The pair generated by Vi-rāṭ Prakṛti is Buddhi or Mahat and Puruṣa. Buddhi or Mahat is visualised in the image of the raṣṭri-devī of the Indus city state who consorted periodically with Puruṣa Brahmans

and sacrificed them or their surrogates in order to reproduce the matriarchal tribe or the matrilineal state and nature. That is why Atharva-veda (VIII.10.4.9, 11-12) chants:

Evolving Vi-rāt came to me. They exclaimed, O Irāvati (Corn-goddess), come here!'

(The priest-king) Pṛthu Vainya milked her, giving rise to cultivation and corn.

Men subsist on this milk of cultivation and corn. He who knows this becomes the cultivator par excellence!

References

1. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, pp. 374-376.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 265.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-252.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 385-386.
7. Jayaswal, K.P., *Hindu Polity*, p. 16.
8. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II, p. 42.
9. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 92-93.
10. Jain, J.C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 216.
11. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Pāthaika-vagga*, VIII.2.
12. Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Pāṇini*, pp. 157-158.
13. Viṣṇu-parva, 19-47.
14. *Ibid.*, 15-19.
15. *Ibid.*, 19-48.
16. Dikshitar, V.R.R., *The Silappadikaram*, p. 53.
17. Danielou, A., 'Silappadikaram', *Illustrated Weekly*, 27-9-1964.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 331.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Apte's Sanskrit English Dictionary, *s.v.*
22. *Ibid.*, *s.v.*
23. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. I, pp. 686-687.
24. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 729.
25. Keith, A.B., *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, p. 115.
26. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 84.
27. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Marathi trans.), p. 379.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 380.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 394-396.
31. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, p. 386.
32. Pathak, Shridharashastri, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-399.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
35. Przyluski, J., *The Sālvas, Indian Studies : Past and Present*, Vol. I., No. 4, pp. 731-732.
36. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 52.
37. Griffith, R., *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, Vol. I, p. 217.
38. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, p. 295.
39. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I, pp. 158-159.
40. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. I, p. 116.
41. Robertson Smith, W., *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 362-363.
42. Gandharva, K., *Mālavā ki Loka-dhune* (Hindi), Nos. 22-24.
43. Griffith, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 407.
44. Chitrav, Siddheswarshastri, *Rg-veda* (Marathi trans.), p. 638.
45. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 48.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
50. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 386-387.
51. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, p. 194.
52. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 55.
53. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, p. 298.
54. *Mrcchakaṭika*, Act I.
55. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II, pp. 85-286; Vol. XIV, pp. 117-118, 215.
56. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 108.
57. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 299; for Nārada, and Bṛhaspati. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 157, 352.
58. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, II.32.4.15.
59. Morgan, L.H., *Ancient Society*, pp. 96-97.
60. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Mahā-vagga*, III.26.110.
61. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, pp. 121-122.
62. Morgan, L.H., *op. cit.*, p. 97.
63. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, pp. 122-123.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-125.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 178.
70. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 303-304.
71. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 20.531.1.
72. *Ibid.*, *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Mahā-vagga*, IV.13.25-29.
73. Frazer, J.G., *The Dying God*, p. 8.
74. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.
75. Thurson, E. and Rangachari, K., *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. III, pp. 368-384.
76. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, p. 366.
77. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
78. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 109; *Taittiriya Saṁhitā*, I.8.16.

79. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 86-87.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
81. Frazer, J.G., *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, Vol. I, pp. 26-29.
82. *Ibid.*, *Adonis Attis Osiris*, Vol. II, pp. 87-88.
83. *Ibid.*, The Scapegoat, pp. 373-374.
84. Robertson Smith, W., *op. cit.*, p. 310.
85. Frazer, J.G., *Adonis Attis Osiris*, Vol. II, pp. 50-51.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.
87. Morgan, L.H., *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73, 120-121.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
90. *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles*, s.v. Horn.
91. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
92. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, pp. 22, 40.
93. *Ibid.*, plate 96.
94. Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, p. 232 ff.
95. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II, p. 141.
96. Robertson Smith, W., *op. cit.*, p. 289.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.
98. *Mahābhārata*, IV.6.15.
99. *Ibid.*, IX.46.25, 28.
100. Frazer, J.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 87-88.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
102. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
104. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 31.
105. *Mahābhārata*, II.9.12-15.
106. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
107. *Amara-kośa*, 1704.
108. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
109. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, pp. 2-3.
110. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
111. *Mahābhārata*, II.3.6.
112. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
113. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, p. 294.
114. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishad*, p. 218.
115. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, p. 511.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 507.
117. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 14.

10

Indus Epoch of Asura Priest-kingship

The Purusa sacrifice was performed not only to reproduce a homogeneous or monolithic tribe, but in order also to reproduce a slave tribe of Śūdras. It is true that the Puruṣa hymn belongs to one of the latest mandals of Rg-veda. But what we have attempted to show is that the hymn is an Aryan modification or adaptation of a pre-Aryan ritualistic hymn. The Aryans could adopt the hymn only when they had turned to agriculture and attained to a stage of 'civilisation' when they could enslave the tribe of Śūdras. But it seems that they could enslave not the whole Śūdra people, but a part of them. For a free tribe of Śūdras is mentioned by Mahābhārata (II.32.10) as living on the banks of the river Sarasvatī, who were defeated by the Pāṇḍava Nakula. Hence, it seems certain that the original, pre-Aryan hymn must have contained the mention of a pre-Aryan tribe of slaves.

But then who were the pre-Aryan people who today are known to us as the builders of the Indus civilisation? The early Vedic Aryans called all the non-Aryans by the set terms Dāsas or Dasyus. But we must accept these epithets with a bit of caution and circumspection. For even in recent times all South Indians used to be called 'Madrāsis' (of the State of Madras) in Maharashtra and in upper parts of India, and few knew that four distinct and great nationalities – Tamils, Kannadigas, Telugus, and Malayalis – inhabited the sub-continent of South India. Similarly, it was only when Africa exploded into struggles of independence in the post-war period that peoples outside the continent came to know that Africa was not inhabited by one single nationality called 'Africans' but by numerous great and ancient nations and nationalities.

The most representative and ancient example of this kind of attitude of the Aryans is encountered in the story of the sage Kavasa Ailūsa as narrated by Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (II.19):

> The seers performed a sacrificial season on the Sarasvatī; they drove away Kavasa Ailūsa from the Soma, 'The child of a slave woman, a cheat, no

Brahman; how has he been consecrated in our midst?' They sent him out to the desert (saying), 'There let thirst slay him; let him drink not the water of the Sarasvati.' He went away to the wilderness afflicted by thirst, saw* the 'Child of the Water' (hymn), 'Forth among the gods let there be speeding for the Brahman'. Thereby he went to the dear abode of the waters; him the waters welled out after, all around him Sarasvati hastened. Therefore they called it here Parisāraka, in that the Sarasvati went all around him. The seers said, 'The Gods know him; let us summon him.' 'Be it so' (they replied). They summoned him; having summoned him they performed this 'Child of the Water' (hymn). It he should recite continuously; Parjanya comes to rain continuously for offspring when one knowing thus recites this continuously. . . .[1]

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa was a Ṛg-vedic seer, and several and very important hymns (X.30-34) are attributed to him. Let us probe deeper into the abuses with which he was assailed by the Aryan seers. The first abuse is 'Dāsyāḥ putraḥ', literally meaning 'son of a Dāsa woman'. Was he really the son of a 'slave woman', as the word Dāsi denotes? The metronymic of Kavaṣa is said to have been 'the son of the woman Ailūṣī' (Ailūṣi-putra).[2] Was Ailūṣi a slave? If Ailūṣī was a slave then the mother of the author of Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Mahi-dāsa Aitareya, herself must be ascribed the same servile status. For, Aitareya is a metronymic, and Śaṅkarācārya, commenting on Chandogya Upaniṣad III.16.7, defines Aitareya as 'The son of the woman Itarā', (Itarā-putra).

But, Ailūṣī is not the proper name of the mother of Kavaṣa. Men and women, in those days, were commonly known and addressed by their tribal denominations: The mother and step-mother of Rāma are known to us simply as Kausalyā (the daughter of the Kosalas) and Kaikeyī (the daughter of the Kekayas) respectively. The younger queen of King Paṇḍu is known to us exclusively by her tribal epithets namely, Mādrī (the daughter of the Madras) or Bāhlī (the daughter of the Bāhlikas). The mother of Sāvitrī was called Mālavī (the daughter of the Mālavas) and her own tribe Sāvitri-putras (the sons of Sāvitrī). Hence, Ailūṣa or Ailūṣī-putra also is a tribal name.

The third abuse – 'a-Brāhmaṇa' (no-Brahman) – throws conclusive light on the first one. Patañjali, commenting on Pāṇinis rule I.4.1, divided contemporary India into 'Brahminical' region (a-Vṛṣalako deśaḥ), and 'non-Brahminical' or 'Śūdra' country (a-Brāhmaṇako deśaḥ).[3] Karṇa defined these non-Brahminical regions as those where people do not perform sacrifices, are devoid of Vedic religion, non-

*The Śrutis invariably say that the seers 'saw' the hymns.

Vedic, among whom inheritance is not through one's own sons but through one's sisters' sons, and hence he ran them down as Dāsas (VII.44.33, 46; VII.45.13). Thus, the abuse 'Dāsyāḥ putraḥ' meant that Kavaṣa belonged to the matriarchal or matrilineal country of the Ailūṣas.

The second abuse 'kitava' literally meant one who played with dice or a gambler and it was only in later times that it came to mean 'a cheat'. We have already seen that communal rāṣṭra land was divided periodically by lot-drawing; hence, kitava means one who supervises the division of rāṣṭra communal land. Aitareya Brāhmana clearly states that Kavaṣa knew the magic of producing rain and progeny and hence Sarasvatī followed him, which means that Kavaṣa was the Brahman sacred consort of the river goddess Sarasvatī and exercised the function of periodically dividing the rāṣṭra communal land of the Ailūṣa tribe which was watered by the river Sarasvatī.*

The same kind of misconception seems to have submerged the tale of the Upaniṣadic philosopher Satyakāma Jābāla as told by Chāndogya Upaniṣad (IV.4.1-2):

1. Once upon a time Satyakāma Jābāla addressed his mother Jabala: 'Madam (Bhavati)! I desire to live the life of a student of sacred knowledge. Of what family, pray, am I?'

2. Then she said to him: 'I do not know this, my dear, of what family you are. In my youth, when I went about a great deal serving as a maid, I got you. So I do not know of what family you are. However, I am Jabala by name; you are Satyakāma by name. So you may speak of yourself as Satyakāma Jābāla.'[4]

Satyakāma addresses his mother here as 'bhavati', which being a synonym of 'bhagavatī', could not be the appellation of a slave woman and a harlot (kumbha-dāsī). Jābāla also means a goat-herd.[5] Patañjali, commenting on Pāṇini II.4.58, says that the fathers and the sons of the Ksatriyas of Bodha, Odumbara, and Jābāla clans were called Baudhis, Audumbaris, and Jābālis respectively. The Bodhas and Udumbaras were constituents of the Śālva confederation.[6] Udumbaras were far famed in ancient times for the woollen cloth they produced.[7] Hence, Jābāla must have been a constituent clan of the matriarchal or

*See the article 'Recent Archaeological Findings' by Thapar, B.K., in the Annual 1973 of the *Times of India*.

matrilineal Śālva confederation, and Jābālā must have been the kulapā of the clan.

The verb pari-car is used by the same Upaniṣad (IV.10.1) – '1. Now, verily, Upakosala Kāmalāyana dwelt with Satyakāma Jābāla as a student of sacred knowledge. For twelve years he tended his fires (paricacāra).'[8]

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (II.3, 7) informs in unmistakable terms that renowned philosopher-priests such as Bhujyu Lāhyāyani and Uddālaka Āruṇi resorted to the matrilineal Madra country for studying sacrifice from Patañcala, the son of the woman Kāpi (VI.5.2). The teacher's wife and daughter used to be possessed by Gandharvas called Sudhanvan Āṅgirasa and Kabandha Ātharvaṇa respectively, and in trances both the women used to put philosophical riddles to their interlocutors. Hence, Jābālā must also have been the priestess of the Jābāla clan of the Śālva-Madra country. As already explained, clan and tribal mothers used to indulge in ritual sexual promiscuity and Satyakāma seems to have been its legitimate outcome.

Hunters or pastoral people are always inimical towards an agricultural people. Briffault cites an interesting instance of two American tribes, namely Iroquois and Algonkin, the former agriculturist and the latter hunter. Formerly they were allies; but because the former dared practise hunting, a bloody feud started amongst them.[9] Muhammad, who led the pastoral Bedouin Arabs to Islam, had an inborn antipathy for agricultural peoples:

> ...Muhammad looked with contempt upon the Kuryshites and Ansari 'for they employ themselves with sowing seed, and we Arabs of the desert are not engaged in sowing'; and pointing to ploughshare and other agricultural implements, he said, 'Those implements do not enter into the house of a nation unless Allah causes lowmindedness to enter there also.' 'The divine glory,' the Prophet is again reported to have said, 'is among the shepherds; vanity and impudence among agricultural peoples.'[10]

According to Nirukta (II.17, VII.28), Dāsa and Dasyu both are derived from the root das, meaning to exhaust works. Durga explains the word 'works' (karmāṇi) as meaning agricultural works.[11] The anti-agriculturist bias of the pastoral Aryans is in unmistakable evidence in the Rk III.53.14. Lakshman Sarup translates the Rk as follows:

> What are the cows doing in the country of the barbarians (Kīkaṭeṣu)? They neither get the milk (to mix) with soma, nor kindle fire. Bring to us the wealth of the usurer (Pra-magandasya). Subdue the low born (naicā-śākham) to us, O lord of wealth.[12]

Nirukta (VI.32) explains kīkaṭa as follows:

> ...Kīkaṭa is the name of a country where the non-Aryans dwell. Non-Aryan tribes are (so-called because it is said), 'What have they done (kīkaṭaḥ, kiṁ kṛtāḥ) or their assumption is that religious rites are useless.'[13]

The dissolution of the compound 'kī-kata' into 'kiṁ kṛtāḥ' is too far-fetched, and this manner of etymology is resorted to only because the original meaning of kaṭa had already gone out of vogue when Nirukta was compiled, while even the far more ancient Nighantu has failed to take cognisance of it. It has already been explained that kaṭa originally meant 'field of the goddess'. In all ancient riparian agricultural civilisations, the rāṣṭra tribal land was believed to belong to a goddess, the deified tribal mother, and originally all land was temple land. In ancient Sumer, according to Diakonoff, all land was temple land.[14] According to Tyumenev, another Soviet scholar, as late as the twenty-fifth and twenty-fourth centuries B.C., in the district of Lagas, thirty per cent of its population worked on temple lands belonging to twenty-one temples in all.[15]

The fields belonging to ancient Egyptian kings (témenos), according to Herodotus, were originally temple lands.[16]

According to Mahābhārata (II.31.11; V.158.15) the capital of the Vidarbha was also called Bhoja-kaṭa. In his conquest of the countries lying in the western direction, the Pāṇḍava Nakula defeated the dwellers of the city called Divya-kaṭa (II.32.11). The capital of Orissa, the land of Yoginī temples, is Kata-ka, the word literally meaning 'of the kaṭa'. Modern Bezwada, when capital of the ancient Andhras in the days of the Sātavāhanas, was called Dhana-kaṭaka.

In the Bhūri-datta Jātaka (543), prince Bhūridatta of the Nāgas (divine cobra or serpent people, having their capital city of Yāmuna under the river Yamunā), upbraiding his younger brother Ariṭṭha for espousing the Brahminic path, says:

> The study of the Vedas, O Ariṭṭha, is but the losing throw of dice (kali) for the wise, while it is the winning throw of dice (kaṭa) for the fools.[17]

Why were the losing and winning throws of dice specifically called kali and kaṭa respectively? Because they led to losing or gaining the kaṭa land. In the Vidhura Jātaka (545) the yaksa Puṇṇaka won in a game of dice from king Dhanañjaya of the Kurus his crown or kaṭa land:

Intoxicated with the passion of dicing, the king of the Kurus and the yakṣa named Puṇṇaka sat down to play with dice. The king lost (the kaṭa land) by the kali (throw of dice), while the yakṣa named Puṇṇaka won (it) by the kaṭa (throw of dice).

Buddhist scriptures also have preserved historical examples of kaṭa temple land. The Sandaka-sutta of Majjhima-nikāya informs us that there was a Deva-kaṭa sobbha near Kosāmbi in the Kosala kingdom. Kosāmbi is the modern Kosam in district Allahabad of Uttar Pradesh. Rahul Sankrityayana and Dharmarakshit in their Hindi translation of the canon (p. 302) state that Deva-kaṭa-sobbha was somewhere near Pabhosā and render the word as 'natural (deva-kṛta) pond'. Apparently not having understood the real meaning of kaṭa, they have followed the misinterpretation of Nirukta. Deva-kaṭa clearly means temple land. Tevijja-sutta of Dīgha-nikāya says that there was a village of Brahmins called Manasā-kaṭa in Kosala country to the north of which flowed the river Aciravatī.[18]

Pāṇini's rule IV.2.139 lays down the process by which the derivatives of the word kaṭa are to be formed. Bhaṭṭoji illustrates the rule thus – kaṭa-nagarī, kaṭa-nagarīyam; kaṭa-ghoṣa, kaṭa-ghoṣīyam. The rule specifically states that the kaṭa institution belonged to the east. It means that cities, towns, villages, and cattle camps belonging to the kaṭa institution still existed in the ancient non-Brahminic east, when it had long ago passed into oblivion in the west. As late as the time of the dramatist Śūdraka (A.D. 100) gamblers swore by kaṭa.[19]

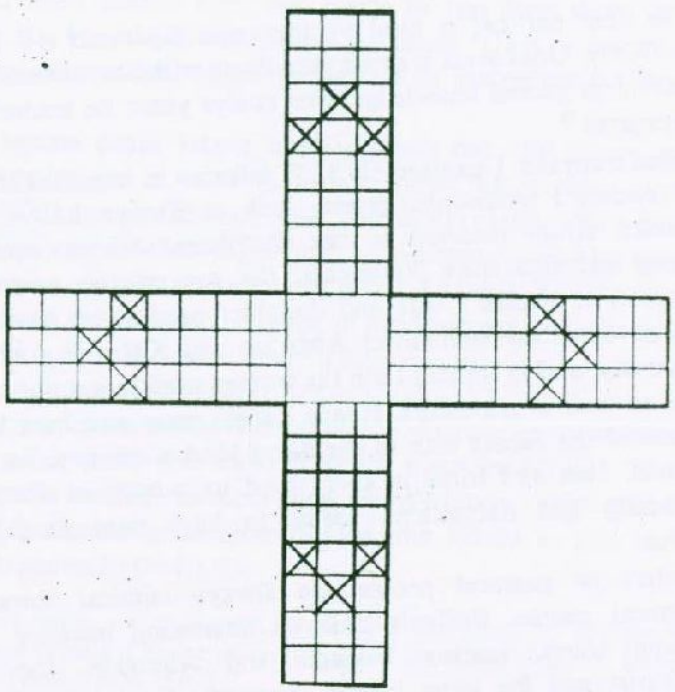
The yakṣa Puṇṇaka told king Dhanañjaya of the Kurus that the total number of dice (akkha, Sanskrit akṣa) were twenty-four.[20] The total number of houses in a paṭa of cau-paṭa or Indian dice-board are also twenty-four. In a paṭa there are three houses that are earmarked kaṭa, making twelve kaṭa houses for all the ninety-six houses of the dice-board. A piece entering into a kaṭa house cannot be killed! Kaṭa is the sanctuary of a die. It is as shown in Diagram 9.

The tiny state of Eḍapilli in Kerala, ruled by a Nambūṭiri Brahmin dynasty, was such a kaṭa land and also a sanctuary:

> The Company has little to do with the chief. However, it is expedient for us to know that this little state is a kind of asylum, like a free town,* to which people, who are afraid of prosecution and punishment, retreat and where they are safe; and more expecially when they are able to reach a temple or pagoda there. This privilege is acknowledged and respected by all Malabar

*The Jaina 'Uttarādhyāyana' (XXX.16) calls such a town 'sam-bādha'.

DIAGRAM 9



> kings. . .he is called by a name that would signify as much as a priestly king. . . .[21]

Thus, the words 'ki kaṭeṣu' should mean 'in which of the temple lands?'

The word 'pra-maganda' is rendered by Nirukta as 'atyanta-kusīdi-kulinaḥ', literally meaning 'born in the most esteemed clan of Kusidins', kusidin apparently being a synonym of Maganda. Sāyaṇa thinks that Maganda is the name of a king of the non-Aryans. According to Panini's rules IV.1.168-173, a king was known by the name of his tribe or people. Hence, Maganda seems to have been the name of a non-Aryan people.

The Maganda people seem to have come down to historical times in the form of a religious sect of wandering ascetics (paribbājakas, Sanskrit pari-vrājakas) called Māgaṇḍiyas. It is significant that Buddha encountered a Māgaṇḍiya ascetic in the Kuru country. The Kurus of Buddha's time were still ruled by a priest-king. Asked by Buddha to expound the central tenet of the Māgaṇḍiya philosophy that had been

taught right from the time of their original preceptors, the Māgaṇḍiya, touching his body, answered, 'This, O Gotama, is the well-being. This is the summum bonum. At present, O Gotama, I am healthy, happy and free from any disease whatsoever.'[22]

There was another sect of wandering ascetics called Ājivikas whose leader, as told by both the Buddhist and Jaina canons, was Makkhali Gosāla. Various interpretations are given of the name Makkhali or its variants maṅkha and Māgadha by these canons. Excepting Buddhaghosa, the great commentator of the Pali scriptures, all scholars concerned agree that Go-sāla (born in a cow shed) was the son of a person called by either of the three names.[23] The Jaina commentator Abhaya-deva observes that the basic creed of Gosāla's sect consisted of two paths or maggas (Sanskrit mārga) namely song and dance.[24] The Buddhist and Jaina sources insist that Ājivikas performed Tantric rites.[25] Gosāla went mad when he heard the news of the destruction of the Vajji tribal confederation at the hands of Ajātasattu, king of Magadha, and died dancing and singing.[26] All these facts taken together go to show that Gosāla was a teacher of Māgaṇḍiya ascetics.

Pronouncing Pra-maganda as Pra-madaka, Nirukta explains that the credo of these non-Aryan people was, '. . .this is the only world and there is no other'.[27] Sāyaṇa informs that the Kīkaṭas were '. . .atheists who have no faith and say: "What is the use of sacrifice, sacred rites, gifts and oblations, Eat and drink, for there is no world other than this". . . .'[28]

Dasyus are also described by the Ṛg-veda in the same strain – 'not sacrificing', 'devoid of rites', 'addicted to strange vows', 'god-hating', etc.[29]

Before becoming systematised into proto-materialism, this so-called hedonist tenet was, and still is, the 'way of life' of the tribal peoples the world over. Barring some, comparatively advanced ones, all the aboriginal peoples in India still lack that trait called 'accumulating mentality' which differentiates and distinguishes them from the 'civilised'. When the present author as a political worker visited Pimpaḷa-pāḍā, an aboriginal hamlet in the Sakri taluka of Dhule district of Maharashtra, he found his Konkaṇī* host engaged in piling the winnowed Nagali (a cheap variety of corn grown by transplantation) into a heap on the threshing ground. The author was told that not long ago any guest or guests happening to visit anybody engaged in

*An aboriginal tribe.

threshing Nāgali was not allowed to leave until the corn was exhausted in a continuous round of 'eating and drinking'. This 'habit' of the expropriated Bhil tribals of the Khandesh region of Maharashtra has passed into an Ahirāṇī proverb – 'The Bhil will not go to work but lie on his back day-dreaming up to that time there is a grain of corn in his earthern pot!' The Divāli festival (not the four-day festival of lamps of their civilised counterparts which falls in the month of Kārtika [October-November]) celebrated by the aboriginals inhabiting the western half of Dhule district and their brethren in the adjoining Gujarat, begins with the coming in of the rabi (winter) harvest, and the ceaseless round of 'eat, drink, sing, and dance' is put an end to only by the rainy season.

That this was the way of life of the tribal states – monarchical and oligarchical – in Buddha's time is vividly brought out in the narrative condemning the licentious life led by the monks Assaji and Punabbasu (Sanskrit Aśva-jit and Punar-vasu) in the oligarchic state of Kiṭā-giri:

1. Now at that time the Bhikkhus. . .Assaji and Punabbasu were dwelling in the Kiṭā Hill, (and they were) wicked Bhikkhus, and shameless. Such as these were the evil practices they followed; they used to plant cuttings of flowers and have them planted (ropenti pi ropāpenti pi); they used to water flowers and have them watered (siñcanti pi, siñcāpenti pi); they used to gather them and have them gathered (ocinanti pi ocināpenti pi); they used to make them up into nose-gays, and have them so made up (ganthenti pi, ganthāpenti pi); they used to make them up, and have them made up (karonti pi, kārāpenti pi) into wreaths, of the kind with the stalks together and of the kind with the stalks separate, of the kind called *mañjarikā*, of the kind called *vidhūtikā*, of the kind called *vaṭaṃsaka*, of the kind called *āveḷa*, of the kind called *uracchada*; – and they then used to take and send wreaths of each of these various kinds to the wives (kula-itthinaṁ) and daughters (kula-dhitānaṁ) and young women (kula-kumārinaṁ) and daughters-in-law (kula-suṇhanaṁ) and female slaves (kula-dāsinaṁ) of respectable families; and they used to eat out of one dish, to drink out of one vessel; to sit on one seat, to lie on one bed, one mat, one coverlet, with the wives, daughters and young women and daughters-in-law and female slaves in respectable families; and they used to eat food at the wrong time, and to drink strong drink and make use of garlands, and scents, and unguents; and they used to dance, and sing, and play music and wanton (dance the rāsa), and all these together in every combination.

2. And they used to amuse themselves at games with eight pieces and ten pieces (dice boards called aṣṭā-pada and daśa-pada) and with tossing up, hopping over diagrams formed on the ground, and removing substances from a heap without shaking the remainder, and with games at dice, and trap-ball, and with sketching rude figures, tossing balls, blowing trumpets, having

matches at ploughing with mimic ploughs, tumbling, forming mimic windmills, guessing at measures, having chariot races, and archery matches, shooting marbles with the fingers, guessing other people's thoughts, and mimicking other people's acts; and they used to practise elephant riding, and carriage driving, and archery and swordsmanship; and they used to run to and fro in front of elephants, and in front of horses and in front of carriages; and they used to exhibit signs of anger, and to wring their hands, and to wrestle, and to box with their fists; and spreading their robes out as a stage they used to invite dancing girls, saying 'Here you may dance, sister!' and greet her with applause.[30]

This way of life distinguishes the epoch starting with primitive communism to the close of slavery.

The 'Asura' people ruled by the brothers, Sunda and Upa-sunda, lived in the same manner according to Mahābhārata (I.208.31):

Every house resounded with the words 'eat, enjoy, give, rejoice, sing and drink for ever and ever.'[31]

Nirukta gives kusīdin as a synonym of Maganda. Kusīdin is invariably taken in the sense of usurer. But, it will be ridiculous to describe such an Epicurean people as 'usurers'. The word must have had a totally different connotation. There was a Rg-vedic seer called Kusīdin Kāṇva to whom are ascribed the hymns VIII.81-83. Here also the epithet Kusīdin cannot be taken in the accepted sense of the term. The original meaning of the term is disclosed by Taittirīya Saṁhitā (III.3.8): Kusīdins were worshippers of earth mother. Kāṇva itself is a metronymic; for in the teachers' list of Vājasaneyi school given by Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (VI.5), Kāṇva is derived as 'son of (the woman) Kāṇvī'.[32] The matrilineal Kāṇvas later seem to have been transformed into evil spirits who endangered the embryo of a woman: for the Atharva-vedic hymn II.25 is an incantation to drive off the Kāṇvas.

Atharva-vedic hymn IV.37.3 mentions an apsaras called Pramandini along with others. It will not be far from correct to assume that she must have been originally the tribal mother of the Magandas. Rk VIII.66.10 brackets the Bekanāṭas and Paṇis as 'usurers' – 'Indra overcomes all the usurers (Bekanāṭas) who behold the daylight and the dishonest merchants (Paṇis).'[33] Nirukta (VI.26) makes Bekanāṭas synonymous with Kusīdins. Kosambi explains the philological history of the Paṇis as follows:

Trader, modern *bania*, comes from the Sanskrit *vanik*, which in turn has no known origin except in Pani. Coin is *pana* in Sanskrit. Trade goods and commodities in general are *panya*. . . . It would seem that some Indus people survived Aryan rapacity to continue the old traditions of trade and manufacture.[34]

Were these Paṇis already a caste in Indus society as they later became? It has already been noted that the oligarchies of Buddha's times admitted nobody in their saṅgha-gaṇa organisation except Kṣatriyas of their own tribal stock. Brahmins and traders could settle in the oligarchic territories, but could not become members of the tribal governing organisation. In matrilineal Kerala, the third caste of the Brahminic four-caste society, Vaiśya, is completely absent.[35] It means that the non-Brahminic oligarchic states in India carried on trade on behalf of their whole ruling oligarchic tribal organisation, or that the oligarchs themselves were traders. The Aṭṭha-kathā says that the bone of contention between the Vajji confederation and the Magadha monarchy was the possession of commodities from Himalaya that landed on a river port of the Ganges. The territories of both these States reached up to the river port. But the oligarchs always stole a march over king Ajātasattu of Magadha and carried away the merchandise before the arrival of the king's emissaries. It was one of the reasons that led to the great war between the two states.[36] Hence, the Paṇis of Rg-veda were not a class of non-Aryan traders, but the non-Aryan oligarchs themselves. It is only in this context that the famous Rg-vedic dialogue between the Paṇis and Sara-mā, the emissary of Indra, can be understood. The Paṇis entreat Sara-mā as follows in Rk. X.108.9:

Even thus, O Saramā, hast thou came hither, forced by celestial might to make the journey.

Turn thee not back, for thou shalt be our sister (svasāram), O Blest One, we will give thee of the cattle.[37]

This clearly denotes that the so-called Paṇis were matriarchal or matrilineal Kusidin people.

Madaka, the synonym of Maganda, as given by Nirukta, demands closer attention. The Madra tribe or its country is pronounced in Pali as Madda. In Kusa Jātaka, king Kusa of the Mallas addresses his wife Pabhāvatī, a princess of the Madra country as follows:

When contracting your eyebrows you frown on me with displeasure, O daughter of king, I become but a cook in the women's apartment of the king of the Madda country.[38]

Kāśikā on Pāṇini IV.2.131 derives Madraka as one born in the

Madra country, from the word Madra, taking the suffix kan. Hence, the Magandas or Madakas could have been nobody else but the historical Madras themselves.

Sāyaṇa thinks that 'Naicā-śākham' must have been the capital of the Magandas.[39] Nirukta renders the word naicā-śākham as a tree whose branches grow downwards. Kaṭha Upaniṣad (VI.1) and Bhagavad-gītā (XV.1) describe the tree Ficus Religiosa (Aśvattha) as a tree whose roots grow upwards and its branches downwards. The seer Śunaḥsepa Ājigarti declares in Rk I.24.7 the Ficus Religiosa to be the sacred tree of Varuṇa. The same tree is mentioned by Rk X.72.3 by the synonym 'uttāna-pada', one whose feet (roots) are upwards.[40] The Ṛg-vedic hymn invoking plants and their triune mother Nirṛti (X.97) says that the matriarchal Nirṛti tribe of 107 clans have their abode in the Ficus Religiosa (X.97.5). The Indus seal bearing the figure of a nude woman upside down and from whose womb a plant is shown sprouting,[41] can be described exactly as 'uttāna-pada'. In another seal a goddess is shown standing in a Ficus Religiosa tree.[42] It has already been demonstrated that the goddess in both the seals can be nobody else but Nirṛti. Hence, Naicā-śākham is but a synonym of Nirṛti, the earth mother, and the Magandas or Madras being Kusīdins, she was the mother goddess of these Indus people. The whole preceding discussion will help us to give a faithful translation of the controversial Ṛk:

> In which of the kaṭa fields are the herds of cows and what are they doing there? They (the Kusīdins) neither mix milk with Soma (-juice) nor worship the fire (god). Help us to secure the wealth of (king) Pra-maganda who hails from the most esteemed clan of the earth-worshipping (Magandas). Enable us, O lord of wealth (Indra), to enslave these votaries of Nirṛti whose abode is the ficus religiosa.

The Kusīdin custom was preserved by even the matrilineal Madras of the Mahābhārata era. Their king Śalya's war-chariot is described as bearing on its flag the golden image of Sītā (VII.105.18-20), the Ṛg-vedic goddess of agriculture and the daughter of earth mother according to Rāmāyaṇa:

> The flag of king Śalya of the Madras bears like a tongue of fire the golden image of the peerless and auspicious Sītā.
>
> Mounting his chariot that Sītā shines, O Venerable One, as if decked with the glory of all sprouting seeds.

What kind of government the Indus State of the Magandas or

Madakas had? As already proved, originally it was definitely matriarchal. Still, we will have to trace the state of development it had reached when the pastoral and patriarchal Aryans arrived on the scene. A broad line of demarcation can be drawn by stating the fact that male kingship, or patrilineality in kingship, evolved only after the coming of the Aryans. As already mentioned, Nighaṇṭu does not contain the term 'rājan', meaning male king, and that the regnal function of periodically distributing the communal rāṣṭra land and produce was exclusively exercised by a Rāṣṭrī. A peculiar rite in the royal consecration (Rāja-sūya) of reciting the pravara of the sacrificer as 'Mānāva-Aila-Paurūravasa iti'[43] reveals that male kingship arose only with Purūravas. Aila was the metronymic of Purūravas, and it literally means the son of Ilā, the rāṣṭrī of the Bāhlikas or Madras. It has already been noted that Purūravas became the priest-king of the Kāśi-Kosalas by marrying Urvaśī, the rāṣṭrī of the country, and exercised the regnal function for four years, after which he was sacrificed. Patrilineal kingship began with his progeny, for his progeny is recited in the formula by its patronymic – Paurūravasa. It is significant that male and patrilineal kingship should originate in the Kāśī-Kosala country.

Ilā was the last rāṣṭrī of the Magandas or Madras. She becomes an anathema in the Atharva-vedic marriage hymn (XIV.2.19) along with Nirṛti:

> 19. Stand up from here; desiring what hast thou (f.) come hither? I (am) thine overcomer, O Iḍā, out of (my) own house: thou that hast come hither, O perdition (Nirṛte), seeking the empty – stand up, O niggard (asate); fly forth; rest not here.[44]

It has already been demonstrated in the last chapter that Tvaṣṭṛ, Vṛtra, and Varuṇa were pre-eminently non-Aryan deities and that they were Asura Brahmans. The etymology of Tvaṣṭṛ is given by Nirukta (VIII.13) as follows:

> '*Tvaṣṭṛ* (is so called because) it pervades quickly,' say the etymologists. Or it may be derived from (the root) *tviṣ*, meaning to shine, or from *tvakṣ*, meaning to do. . . .[45]

He is the divine worker or Kartā, which is an inevitable concomitant of his sacred consortship of the triune Vāk. But, he is no more simply a periodical Brahman as Soma was of Nirṛti, as is evident from Rk I.161.4:

4. When thus, O Ribhus, ye had done ye questioned thus,
Whither went he who came to us a messenger?
Then Tvashtar, when he viewed the four wrought chalices,
concealed himself among the Consorts of the Gods.[46]

Tvaṣṭr could not have 'hidden' himself among the 'consorts of gods', rather among the mother goddesses, without dressing as a woman, as Rudra is described doing by Rāmāyaṇa (VII.87.11-12):

In that region (of the sacred grove), Hara, the overlord of gods, who, waited upon by his retinue, and whom no one dares espie, was dallying with the daughter of the monarch of mountains.

The lord of Umā whose flag bears the emblem of a bull, lives in that mountaineous region intersected by streams, assuming the female form in order to please the Devi.

Rk VIII.33.19 tells us that not only the divine Brahmans, but also mortal Brahmans resorted to the same *modus vivendi:*

Gaze downwards, not up; hold your feet close together; let not your rump be seen; for thou, O priest (Brahmā), art become a woman.[47]

Assumption of female attire by male priests is a worldwide phenomenon. Briffault cites a number of examples.[48]

The priestly function originally belonged exclusively to women, and hence it was thought by male priests that female attire would preserve the efficacy of magic.[49] The resort to appropriate the priestly function of woman is the form of manifestation of the struggle that is waged by patriarchy against matriarchy.[50] To appropriate the priestly function of woman is the first step taken by the male. That is why Tvaṣṭr and the unnamed Brahman had to don female attire. *But, the real objective of the taking over of the female priestly function in the context of a matriarchal agricultural society was not only the appropriation of the rain-making magic, but also the appropriation of the regnal task of periodical apportionment of the communal rāṣṭra land and produce. The former function is needed by all primitive societies, agricultural as well as non-agricultural, while the latter function belongs exclusively to ancient agricultural societies, and it being the regnal function, the conflict develops into a life and death struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy.*

It does not suffice for the Brahman to 'become a woman' and a periodical king like Purūravas, but in order to escape premature death in Puruṣa-medha, son and not daughter of his own loin must succeed him. Purūravas mourns for the same thing (X.95.12-13):

(Pur.) 'When will the son that is born yearn after his father? He will have shed flooding tears, knowing (what happened) – Who dares separate the wedded pair in accord as long as the (ancestral) fire burns in the house of the father-in-law?'

(Urv.) 'I answer you, let him shed ample tears, he will not cry, heedful of (my) sacred office; I will send you that or thine that thou hast with us. Go to thy destiny; thou fool thou canst not reach me.'[51]

But this patrilineality can be achieved only by marrying one's own uterine sister, the real heir to the regnal office, by which the two opposites, the old mother right and the new father right, are reconciled in such a manner that the latter is established without violating the former. When matriarchy has reached a stage when the rāstri, instead of taking a periodical Brahman from her own tribe, starts marrying an alien prince like Purūravas to whom the regnal office passes for increasingly longer periods, e.g., the twelve-year period of the Perumāls, and the 28 years of Osiris, the first priest-king of the Egyptians, she prefers to marry her brother, uterine or collateral, in order to keep the regnal office in the royal clan. The first and the most extensive evidence of this dynastic incest we get is the famous Rg-vedic dialogue of the twins, Yama and Yami. Nirukta (XII.10) relates their birth-story as follows:

Saraṇyū, daughter of Tvaṣṭr bore twins, Yama and Yami, to Vivasvat the sun. . . .[52]

Yama is called the priest-king (dharma-rāja) of the dead. The residence of the manes is believed to be the world of moon (pitr-yana). Hence, the ruler of the dead is but a form of moon god. Yami also means earth according to Taittiriya Saṁhitā (III.3.8.3), which goes to confirm the lunar identity of Yama. In the Rg-vedic hymn X.10, the earth goddess Yamī makes open advances to Yama, the moon god, and though he declines to oblige her, it only means that dynastic incest had outlived its social function and hence had come into disrepute. A free rendering of the Rks X.10.2-10 is given below:

(Yama) – 'Your friend loves not the friendship which can transform the (uterine) relationship into otherwise. Sons of the mighty Asura (Varuna), the heroes, supporters of the heavens, see far around them.'

(Yamī) – 'Yes, this the immortals desire of you, progeny of the sole existing mortal. Then let your soul and mine be knit together, as a husband enters the body of his wife.'

(Yama) – 'Shall we do now what we never did aforetime? We who spoke

righteously now talk impurely? Gandharva in the flood, the Yoṣa* of waters – such is our bond, such our most lofty relationship.'

(Yamī) – 'Even in the womb the impregnator and Viśva-rūpa god Tvaṣṭr created us as consorts. None violates his holy ordinances; that we are (wife and husband) is already known to heaven and earth.'

(Yama) – 'Who knows that earliest day to which you are alluding? Who has beheld it? Who can here declare it? Great is the law of Varuṇa and Mitra. What, wanton, will you say to men to tempt them?'

(Yamī) – 'I, Yami, am possessed by love of Yama, that I may lie on the same bed to copulate with him. I uncover my body before you as a wife before her husband.'

(Yama) – 'They stand not still, they never close their eyelids, these sentinels of gods who wander round us. Not me, go quickly, wanton, with another, and hasten like a chariot wheel to meet him.'

(Yamī) – 'Will any one make him mine so that I may cohabit with him night after night, day after day? Will the sun's eye condescend to glance upon this again and again? Though the Heaven and Earth are uterine brothers, they have become husband and wife.'

(Yama) – 'Sure there will come succeeding times when uterines (jāmayaḥ) will do un-uterinelike (ajāmi) acts. Not me, O fair one, seek another husband, and make your arm a pillow for that bull.'

Dasaratha Jātaka (461) relates that Rāma, the eldest son of king Dasaratha of Vārāṇasi, the capital of the Kasi-Kosalas, married his uterine sister Sītā when he succeeded his father.[53]

According to Rāmāyaṇa, the chief queen of king Daśaratha was Kausalyā, the word meaning 'daughter of the Kosalas'. Lakṣmaṇa told Rāma that she owned 1,000 villages and that she could easily feed all those who depend on her (II.31.22-23). All these facts lead us to conclude that Kausalyā was the rāṣṭrī of the Kosalas and that she had married her own brother Daśaratha, and Sītā being the legitimate heir of the hitherto matrilineal kingdom, Rama could become king only by marrying her.

Udaya Jātaka (458) tells us that prince Udayabhadra of the same Kāsis had to marry his step-sister Udayabhadrā before he could be consecrated to kingship.[54] As the folk tale was utilised for popularising Buddhist religion, which was a patriarchal religion, the Jātaka goes on to say that the couple observed strict celibacy up to that time Udayabhadra was alive. After his demise the Kāsis allowed only Udayabhadrā to rule them, which again denotes that the Kāsis could revert to matriarchy even in this period. Udayabhadra, after his death, it is said, became Sakka, king of the gods, and tried to lure

*According to Nirukta (II.10) yoṣā means a woman given to ritual sexual promiscuity.

Udayabhadrā into having intercourse with him. She retorted, 'I love nobody in (the worlds of) gods, yakṣas and men except Udaya.'[55] When Sakka revealed his identity as Udayabhadrā she entreated him:

If you are Udaya in truth and if you have come to fulfil that promise (you made before your demise), then, O son of a king, instruct me so that I may again have intercourse with you (in the celestial world).[56]

A tirthaṅkara of Jaina religion, Usabha (Sanskrit Ṛṣabha, meaning bull), married his own sisters by name Sumaṅgalā and Sunandā, and we are further told that brother-sister marriage was prevalent in his time.[57]

According to Kalpa-sūtra,[58] Usabha was the first king (paṭhama-rāyā) of Kosala, while his father Nābhi was the seventh in a line of Ikṣvāku kulakaras (clan-makers) or patriarchs. Usabha's mother was called Marudevi. It means that though Marudevi was still formally the rāṣṭrī of the Kosalas, nevertheless, in order to be consecrated to kingship, Usabha had to marry his sisters, the legitimate heirs to Kosala kingship.

We are told by Buddha himself that the four progenitors of the Śākya tribe were the sons of king Okkāka (Sanskrit Ikṣvāku) of the Kosalas. They, Okkā-mukha, Karakaṇḍa, Hatthinika, and Sini-sūra by name, married their own sisters. When King Okkāka was informed of this, he excitingly congratulated his sons.[59] According to Kuṇāla Jātaka (536), even as late as Buddha's time, the Śākyas clung to this ancient custom of brother-sister marriage.[60] Dynastic incest is a world-wide phenomenon. The ancient Greeks practised it. Adonis himself was the fruit of the union of his father Cinyras, king of Cyprus, with Myrrha, the king's own daughter.[61] Frazer lists cases of such incest as follows:

Clymenus, king of Arcadia, with his daughter Harpalyee;
Oenomeus, king of Pisa, with his daughter Hippodamia;
Erechtheus, king of Athens, with his daughter Procris;
Epopeus, king of Lesbos, with his daughter Nycrimene.[62]

We come across such father-daughter incest in India as early as Rg-vedic times in Rks I.71.5, X.61.5-7. Rk X.61.7 describes the incest of Prajā-pati (Universal Father) with his daughter Usas, though meaning dawn, originally tribal mother who apportioned communal rāṣṭra land and produce:

The (tribe of) gods brought into being the protector of sacrifices, the lord of

house (Rudra), through the (sacred) intercourse of the Brahman (universal father) with his daughter (Uṣas).

Frazer gives the reason underlying these dynastic incests as follows:

> . . .in countries where the royal blood was traced through women only and where consequently the king held office merely in virtue of his marriage with an hereditary princess, who was the real sovereign, it appears to have often happened that a prince married his own sister, the princess royal, in order to obtain with her hand the crown which otherwise would have gone to another man, perhaps a stranger. . . . The king was bound to vacate the throne on the death of his wife, the queen, since he occupied it only by virtue of his marriage with her. . . . Hence, if the king desired to reign after his wife's death. . .was by marrying his daughter.[63]

The Karian royal dynasty followed the custom of brother-sister marriage. Artemesia, the eldest daughter of Hekatomnos, king of Karia, married her brother Mausolos after her succession to the throne. Her sister Ada, who succeeded her, married her younger brother Hidiers.[64] The island city state of the Phaiakians, as described by Homer in his Odyssey, was ruled by queen Arete and her husband-brother Alkinoos.[65] The relation of uncle and niece is superimposed on the original brother and sister relation: for scholiast Hesiod unambiguously states that Alkinoos and Arete were brother and sister.[66] On the divine plane the six sons of the god of wind were married to his six daughters.[67]

The first divine king of Egypt, Osiris, was the husband-brother of the great mother goddess Isis. Egyptian Pharaohs also had to resort to dynastic incest.[68] The custom was not the privilege of royalty, but was also a popular usage.[69] This device was adopted also by the Incas of Peru and the kings of Bagota.[70] The first king of Ceylon was the fruit of dynastic incest.[71]

As already pointed out, Pūṣan is the bhāga-dugha (apportioner of communal raṣtra land and its produce) of the gods. Pūṣan also means earth, or in other words, he is the son of earth. How could he appropriate this function of the earth mother? By marriage with his own sister Usas, and hence he is called by Rks VI.55.5-6 'sister's lover (svasur jāraḥ)'.

The epithet Visva-rupa originally belonged to the triune Nirṛti, the primal mother goddess of the Indus people, and after her, to her descendant Vāk, the triune rāṣtrī-devī of the gods. But, Nighaṇṭu (I.15.9) informs us that the epithet is the prerogative of Bṛhaspati. We already know that Tvaṣṭṛ is the Bṛhaspati par excellence. How did he

secure the epithet Viśva-rūpa, which literally meant universe-formed? Evidently by becoming the sacred consort of the three goddesses of the Ṛg-vedic Āprī hymns, who are but the triune manifestation of rāṣtri-devi Vāk. It is only by marrying his sister Vāk and attiring himself like a woman that Tvaṣṭṛ could appropriate the regnal and priestly function. With Vṛtra, Tvaṣṭṛ's son, the process of appropriating both these functions reaches its consummation. Vṛtra is known not only by his metronymic: Viśva-rūpa, but also by his patronymic: Tvāṣtra. We definitely know that he exercised the regnal function of the apportionment of rāṣtra land and its produce. Tvaṣṭṛ is never called three-headed or triune, while Vṛtra is specifically called three-headed (tri-śiras).[72]

Tri-śiras Tvāṣtra is the seer of the Ṛg-vedic hymns X.8-9. He is also called Ṣindhu-dvīpa Ambara-īśa, literally meaning the island born son of the sky god. The Brahman Vyāsa also was called Dvaipayana, because Satyavatī Kālī, the priestess of the river goddess Yamunā, gave birth to him on an island of Yamunā (I.104.13-14). Nirṛti and Vāk in their triune aspect, and being mother goddesses of the riparian civilisation, were also river goddesses. The Greek travellers describe that when the Indus and her tributaries are in spate the elevated parts on their banks turn into islands,[73] which must also have been the case with the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Hence, it is not improbable that the Brahman Vṛtra could have come to be called Sindhu-dvīpa, the city-dweller (Puruṣa).

Taittirīya Saṁhitā (II.5.1.1) narrates that one head of Vṛtra drank Soma, the second drank Surā, and the third ate food. Surā, according to Nighaṇṭu (I.12.25), means water, and it is significant that Soma is not given as a synonym of water. Through Soma he has retained his lunar and non-Aryan Asura Brahman identity. It is as the matrilineal Asura that he cheated the patriarchal gods of their shares in the apportionment of rāṣtra land and its produce, and that is why it is said that he was beheaded by Indra. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa gives the following version of the account:

> 16. Now Vṛtra, on being struck, lay contracted like a contracted leather bottle drained of its contents, like a skin bag with the barley meal shaken out. Indra rushed at him, meaning to slay him.
>
> 17. He said, 'Do not hurl (thy thunderbolt) at me! Thou art now what I (was before). Only cut me in twain; but do not let me be annihilated!' He replied, 'So be it!' He accordingly cut him in twain; and from that (part) of his which was of Soma nature, he made the moon, and that which was demoniacal (asurya) he made enter these creatures as their belly. . . .[74]

This *Asura priest-king*, as representative of the moon god, had still to die periodically, with the difference that instead of killing himself he had to be killed by another like Indra, who, therefore, came to be known as *Asura-ghna*. The custom of ritual suicide by the Perumals also gave way to ritual killing by prescribed persons, but thereby also *extending his life* up to the time it was not extinguished by a desperado.[75] According to Fracis Wrede, who wrote his account in 1793, the desperadoes who made a twelve-yearly attempt on the life of the Zamorin were drawn from the taṙavad of the Walluvanād Raja.[76] Elie Reeles states in his account of the great sacrifice that not every attempt was unsuccessful.[77]

Varuṇa is the *last* deity of the Indus people. Being taken over by the Aryans, he is the most ancient Vedic god in that sense only. Varuṇa is derived from the same root vṛ (Nighaṇṭu X.3) from which Vṛtra is derived.[78] As already mentioned, Varuṇa's favourite tree is said to have been ficus religiosa. As expressed by Yama in Ṛk X.10.8, he was a dreaded god. Anybody going against his statutes was bound by his fatal fetters, as expressed by the Atharva-vedic hymn IV.16:

6. What fetters (pāśa) of thine, O Varuṇa, seven by seven, stand triply relaxed (*vi-sṛ*), shining – let them all bind him that speaks untruth; whoso is truth speaking let him go.

7. With a hundred fetters, O Varuṇa, do thou bridle (abhi-dhā) him; let not the speaker of untruth escape thee, O men-watcher; let the villain sit letting his belly fall (apart), like a hoopless vessel, being cut round about.[79]

Even a king like Hariścandra Aikṣvāka could be visited with the dread disease of dropsy for not fulfilling his compact made with Varuṇa.[80] That is why he is called Pāśin.[81] Like Nirṛti, but instead of her, Varuṇa now is invoked for obtaining deliverance from his fatal fetters. One of his victims, the Ṛg-vedic Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti, supplicates him by addressing him as king (Ṛk I.24.12, 13, 15). Though Vṛtra was already a priest-king, he was never called a king. Varuṇa is the first Asura priest-king who is called a king. But, though Śunaḥśepa supplicated Varuṇa for deliverance, his bonds fell off only when he invoked Uṣas. Kingship was still derived from woman, only men in the female line could succeed to it, and they also could exercise it only through dynastic incest. This is Asura priest-kingship and its era commences with Vṛtra-Varuṇa.

Uṣas, the divine consort of her brother and husband Pūṣan, is still the universal mother according to Ṛk I.113.19:

...In i.113.19, she is the mother of all the gods, a numen of Aditi; mātā devānām aditer anikam. Her real status slips out in a more important reference, which is in a hymn dedicated to Agni (IV.2.15):

'We seven sages shall generate (or be born) from mother Uṣas, the first men sacrificers; we shall become Aṅgirasas, sons of heaven, we shall burst the rich mountain, shining forth.' Uṣas was, therefore, a high mother goddess....[82]

Her epithet, according to Ṛks IV.30.8-9, is 'the daughter of heaven' (divo duhitā). Hence it is but natural that her sons should be called 'the sons of heaven' (divas putrāḥ); for according to the rule of succession obtaining in matrilineality, the sons of a rāṣṭri were nearer to the throne than the sons of a king by his non-royal wife. The epithet 'daughter of heaven' was still applicable to her human representative. For the rāṣṭri who had surrendered the regnal and sacerdotal power to her husband-brother was still considered to be a goddess by her people in her life-time itself. Arete, the queen of the Greek island city-state of Phaiakians, was believed to be a divine being by her people.[83] Rāṣṭris from Nirṛti and Vāk to Bhadrā Kākṣivatī and Draupadī Pāñcālī were addressed as devī or goddess. If the rāṣṭris like Uṣas were 'daughters of heaven', then their sacred consorts should in the fitness of things be called 'slaves of heaven'. And such is Divodāsa, literally meaning 'slave of heaven', whose birth story is recited by the first Ṛk of the Ṛg-vedic hymn VI.61 invoking the river goddess Sarasvatī:

To Vadhryaśva when he worshipped her with gifts she gave fierce Divodāsa, canceller of debts. Consumer of the churlish niggard, one and all, thine, O Sarasvati, are these effectual boons.[84]

Divodāsa has two epithets here – rabhasa and ṛṇa-cyuta. Rabhasa, according to Nighaṇṭu (III.3.20), is a synonym of mahat or great. The etymological elucidation of iriṇa, occurring in the Ṛg-vedic hymn invoking dice and agriculture (X.34), given by Nirukta (IX.8), tallies exactly with ṛṇa-cyuta – '...Board (iriṇam) is free from debt (nir-ṛṇam)....'[85] Hence, ṛṇa-cyuta seems to be synonymous with iriṇa, the communal rāṣṭra land. We have already seen that the triune Ambā or rāṣṭri mimed copulation with the corpse of her sacred consort and later with his surrogates, a he buffalo, and then a horse, in order to produce an heir to the matriarchal and then matrilineal kingdom. An exactly similar ritual of presenting the fruit of sacred marriage to her Brahman consort by a raṣṭri is narrated by Rāmāyaṇa (VII.89.23-24):

Then the broad-hipped Ilā gave birth to a mighty son called Purūravas in the ninth month, begot upon her by the son of Soma. As soon as he was

born, the broad-hipped Ilā handed over the mighty son, a very image of Buddha, to his father.

The Ṛg-vedic dialogue between Urvaśi and Purūravas (X.95) narrates that Purūravas was raised by river goddesses:

(? Urv.) – 'As he was born, there sat the gods' wives: the self-made rivers made him grow. Thee, O Purūravas, the gods have raised for the great battle, for victory over the Dasyus.[86]

Bhīṣma was also raised by the river goddess Gaṅgā who handed him over to his father king Śantanu (I.100.34):

(Gaṅgā) – 'Take charge of this son (of thine) brought up by me, O great king, and accepting him (from me), O tiger amongst men, take him to your home, O mighty one.'

Bharata, after whom the tribe of Divodāsa is supposed to have been named, was born to, and brought up by, the Aspsara Śakuntalā.[87] She brought him to his father king Duṣyanta and said (I.74-17):

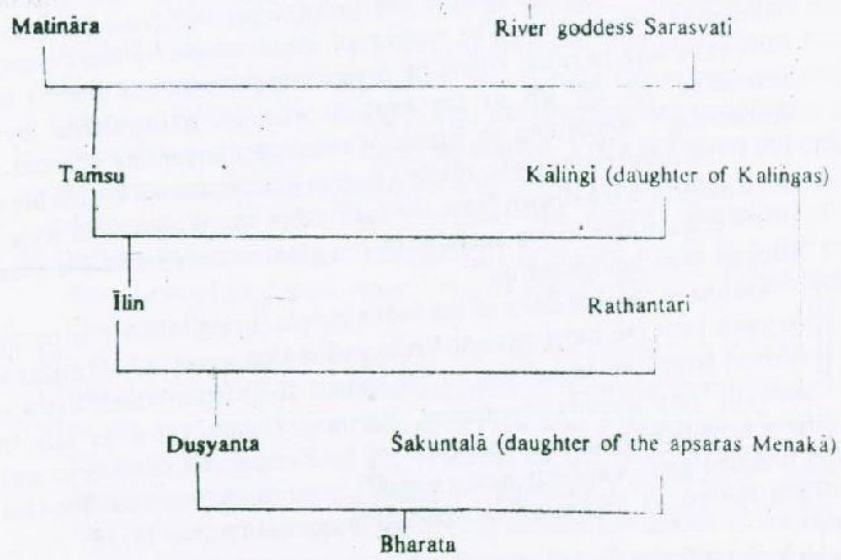
This godlike son, O king, has been produced by you on me. Do with him as you deem fit, O best among men.

Duṣyanta was the son of king Ilin (I.71.8, I.73.25), and he was a descendant of the lunar dynasty that originated with the Aila Purūravas and Urvaśī, the rāṣṭri of the Kāśī-Kosalas (I.95.7). The immediate forefathers of Duṣyanta were as shown in Diagram 10 (I.95.26-31).

It has already been mentioned that the three goddesses of the Āpri hymns are (1) Sarasvati (river goddess), (2) Īlā (food), and (3) Bhārati or Mahī (earth). Purūravas was called Aila, son of Ilā, and it is but natural that his descendants should be called Ilins. As the Bharatas were descended from Bhārati,[88] and as they were also called Ilins, they were also the people of Ilā, the rāṣṭri of the Bāhlika-Madras or Maganda-Madakas.

Purūravas calls himself Vasiṣṭha in Ṛk X.95.17. Kosambi renders the word as 'the most excellent'.[89] Vasiṣṭha appears as a Brahman *priest* only with king Su-dās.[90] From that time onwards Vasiṣṭha is always styled as 'Maitrā-Varuṇi', the son of the gods Mitra and Varuṇa. As the Brahman institution originated with the pre-Aryans, and as the Brahman Asura institution had already attained to priest-kingship with Varuṇa, the son of Varuṇa, i.e., Vasiṣṭha, in the pre-Aryan context, could only mean the reigning Asura priest-king. Hence, Vasiṣṭha must have been an epithet of Divodāsa.

DIAGRAM 10



Sudās is said to have been a son or grandson of Divodāsa. But, the word Sudās, pronounced as Su-dāḥ, means, according to Nirukta (II.24), 'bountiful giver'.[91] Thus, Su-dās is in no way connected with the pre-Aryan dynasty of Divo-dāsas. The famous feud of the non-Aryan Brahman priest-hood of the Vasiṣṭhas and the Aryan Hotṛ priesthood of the patriarchal Gādhin Viśvāmitras begins with the reign of Sudās. According to tradition, Sudās himself was always at loggerheads with his Brahman priest Vasiṣṭha. But, on the other hand, according to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII.34; VIII.21), it was Vasiṣṭha, the first Brahman priest, who consecrated Sudās Paija-vana to kingship. Evidently a sharp break seems to have taken place with Divodāsa, while a recombination seems also to have been brought about with Sudās. This complex change can only be understood from the celestial battle that took place between Uṣas, the mother goddess as well as the sister-queen of Divodāsa, and Indra, the god of Sudās. Kosambi throws valuable light on this epochal clash:

Vasiṣṭha says *abhūd uṣā indratamā maghoni* (vii.79.3), where the aorist past tense seems to me to indicate that Uṣas had once been but was no longer superlatively Indra's equal. The support for this is from the tale of conflict between the two deities. The mention is not isolated, for we find it in ii.15.6, X.138.5, X.73, 6, but with greatest detail in iv.30.8-11:

'This heroic and virile deed didst thou also do, O Indra, that thou didst strike down (or kill) the evil-plotting woman, the daughter of heaven. Uṣas, verily the daughter of heaven, the great, to be regarded as great, didst thou crush, O Indra. Uṣas fled from the shattered wagon in fright, when the Bull (Indra) had rammed her. Her wagon lay completely smashed to bits on the Vipās (river), she (herself) fled to the farthest distance.'[92]

Rk V.30.9 says that Indra defeated the army of Dāsas in which women fought along with men:

(O Indra,) you were confronted by the Dāsa Namuci's army in which women also wielded weapons. But how could such a feminine host withstand your (might)? You decimated the Dasyus in that battle and took away two women prisoners (as slaves to your home).

These women seem to be the priestesses of the mother goddess, who accompanied the army to inspire it with the sacred presence of the mother goddess through their persons, and also to take charge of the prisoners of war in order to sacrifice them. When Skanda, the consecrated commander-in-chief of the gods, started on his campaign against the demons, the enemies of the gods, the army was led by innumerable mother goddesses (Mahābhārata, IX.46.30-31):

These and many other multiformed mother goddesses, O full of the Bharatas, followed the son of Kṛttikā (Skanda) in (hundreds and) thousands.

The word 'anas', meaning wagon, is of special significance. Kosambi quotes a passage from Tacitus in which the rites of earth mother Nerthus of the ancient Germans are described:

...'They are distinguished by a common worship of Nerthus or Mother Earth. They believe that she interests herself in human affairs and rides through their peoples. In an island of ocean stands a sacred grove and in the sacred grove, stands a car drapped with a cloth which none but the priest may touch. The priest can feel the presence of the goddess in this holy of holies, and attends her, in deepest reverence, as her car is drawn by kine. Then follow days of rejoicing and merry-making in every place that she honours with her advent and stay. No one goes to war, no one takes up arms; every object of iron is locked away; then and then only, peace and quiet known and prized, until the goddess is again restored to her temple by the priest, when she has had her fill of the society of men. After that, the car, the cloth, and believe it if you will, the goddess herself are washed clean in a secluded lake. This service is performed by slaves who are immediately afterwards drowned in the lake'....[93]

Nirukta (XI.27) explains anas as:

...derived from (the verb) *an*, meaning to live; it is a means of livelihood for people.[94]

A synonym of anas is śa-kaṭa. Hari-vaṁśa (II.6) relates that Yakṣī Pūtanā,* the mother goddess of the sacred grove of holy basil (Vṛndāvana) and the ruler of the region, enraged at the shattering of her śakaṭa by the infant Kṛṣṇa, tried to kill him by breast-feeding, but was herself sucked to death by the infant. Śa-kaṭa originally must also have meant 'with temple land'. Hence, shattering of the anas of Uṣas by Indra means that the riparian agricultural economy of the Indus State was destroyed by the Aryans.

Kosambi observes that the Ṛg-vedic hymn iv.42 represents the displacement of Varuṇa by Indra, while no such conflict is found to have taken place between the older god Tvaṣṭṛ and Indra.[95] This clearly shows the epochal change-over from Asura matrilineal priest-kingship to Aryan patriarchal priest-kingship.

References

1. Keith, A.B., *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, pp. 148-149.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Puri, B.N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 80.
4. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 218.
5. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
6. Puri, B.N., *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
7. Przyluski, J., *The Udumbaras, Indian Studies : Past and Present*, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 741-744.
8. Hume, R.E., *op. cit.*, p. 221.
9. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. I, pp. 449-450.
10. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 111.
11. Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, p. 124.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Diakonoff, I.M., *Ancient Mesopotamia*, p. 173.
15. Tymunev, A.I., *Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 122-124.
16. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I, p. 508.
17. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pali*. 22.543.919.
18. *Ibid.*, *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli*, Sīlak-khandha-vagga, XIII.1.
19. *Mṛcchakaṭika*, Act II.
20. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI. p. 320.
21. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, p. 76.
22. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, II.23.3.10.
23. Basham, A.L., *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas*, pp. 35-37; Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, pp. 519-521.

*As explained in the last chapter, Pūtanās were the female companions of the mother goddess Durgā.

24. Basham, A.L., *op. cit.*, p. 214; Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 523.
25. Basham, A.L., *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107, 112-113; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLV, p. 411.
26. Chattopadhyaya, D. *op. cit.*, p. 523.
27. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 111.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 347.
30. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVII, pp. 347-349; Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Cullavagga-pāli*, I.3.21-23, *Pārājika-pāli*, II.13.198-200.
31. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vol. XVIII, p. 261.
32. Hume, R.E., *op. cit.*, p. 174.
33. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 107.
34. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 80.
35. Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *Kerala : Yesterday, Today and Tommorrow*, pp. 33-34.
36. Sanskrityayana, R. and Kashyap, J., *Dīgha-nikaya* (Hindi trans.), p. 117.
37. Griffith, R., *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, Vol. II, p. 551.
38. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pali*, 20.531.10.
39. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 111.
40. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *Rg-veda* (Marathi trans.), pp. 34, 381.
41. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, p. 293.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. i, pp. 493-494.
44. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 757.
45. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 135.
46. Griffith, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 212-213.
47. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 77.
48. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 531.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 534.
50. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 434-435.
51. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 51.
52. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 187.
53. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. IV, pp. 325, 330.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 306-307.
55. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pali*, 11.458.41.
56. *Ibid.*, 11.458.53.
57. Jain, J.C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, pp. 159-160, 372.
58. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, pp. 281-282.
59. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, III.4.14, III.5.20-21.
60. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, pp. 497-498.
61. Frazer, J.G., *Adonis Attis Osiris*, Vol. I, pp. 41-42.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 389-390.
65. Thomson, G., *op. cit.*, p. 419.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 420; Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 411-412.
67. Thomson, G., *op. cit.*, p. 417.
68. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 37-38.

69. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 384.
70. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 26.
71. Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, p. 213.
72. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, II.5.1.1.
73. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 67.
74. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XII, p. 167.
75. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 390.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.
78. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 154.
79. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.
80. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII.15.
81. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
82. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 63.
83. Thomson, G., *op. cit.*, p. 418.
84. Griffith, R., *op. cit.*, p. 631.
85. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 141.
86. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 51.
87. *Mahābhārata*, I.74.1, 5.
88. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 97.
89. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 82.
90. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, pp. 274-277.
91. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 36.
92. Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, p. 63.
93. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
94. Sarup, L., *op. cit.*, p. 183.
95. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*

11

Dāsa Slavery

Aho siddha-arthata teṣām yeṣām santi iha pāṇayaḥ!
Ativa spṛhaye teṣām yeṣām santi iha pāṇayaḥ!
Pāṇimadbhyaḥ spṛhā asmākaṁ yatha tava dhanasya vai.
Na pāṇi-labhād adhiko lābhaḥ kaś ca na vidyate.

O, they are crowned with success that have hands!
I eagerly wish for the status of those that have hands!
We covet hands as eagerly as you covet riches.
There is no acquisition that is more valuable than acquisition of hands.

Mahābhārata, XII.180.11-12.

If Divo-dāsa himself was not a slave, how is it that he has the name-ending denoting the slave class? It is not enough to say that his 'social' relation with the rāṣṭrī Divo-duhitā was that of a slavish nature. The termination dāsa is inconceivable without the prior existence of some kind of slavery in that society.

The ancient agricultural civilisations all over the world arose without exception in river valleys. As in other sister civilisations, the Indus civilisation used bronze and stone tools.[1] Though stupendous monuments or their vestiges have been left by these civilisations, which testify to the great advance they had made in the use of tools at their disposal, the tools they used were primitive. The agriculture that made these civilisations possible was conducted, according to Greek travel accounts, by the most primitive of wooden implements and labour.[2]

Not a single one of these agricultural civilisations could arise in cold climate which required more clothing and food as compared to tropical or warm climates in which these civilisations thrived. Even the kings of ancient India required comparatively far less clothing. Pandya kings of the Sangam period wore a single piece of cloth below their waists.[3] According to Chinese travel accounts of the seventh century,

the clothes worn by the king and the nobles of Cochin were as scanty as those worn by their royal neighbour.[4] The Northerner Bodhi-sattva, depicted in the mural of Ajanta, is dressed in no way dissimilar to his Southern fellow oligarchs. Kanakasabhai gives a graphic description of the dress of the commoners in the Sangam period:

> In the ordinary dress of the Tamil women, the shoulders, arms and body down to the waist were entirely bare, the drapery descending from the loins downwards to the ankles. The part of the body which was left uncovered was generally adorned with sandal and other fragrant powders. The Naga women appear to have been almost naked like those depicted in the Amaravati sculptures. The courtezans wore a piece of muslin which covered their body from the waist to the middle of the thigh; but it was of such fine texture that it hardly concealed their person. The women of the hill tribes wore bunches of green leaves tied to a string round their waist. The wives of wandering minstrels called Panar, who accompanied their husbands during their travel, are described as perfectly nude. In fact, nudity does not appear to have been a disgrace in ancient India.[5]

Hence, men and women could be put to work on the least amount of clothing and food to keep the body and soul together, leaving amounts of surpluses that could generate these riparian civilisations.

The two bumper harvests raised on river-silted (rāṣṭra-dā) lands with the most primitive of tools worked by the commonest of labourers fed with the minimum of food and clothed with the barest of clothing, made slavery possible.[6] The labour of a slave was thus but the extension of the labour of draught animals. Marx explains:

> In the relationship of slavery and serfdom, there is no such separation (as existing between wage-labour and capital); what happens is that one part of the society is treated by another as the mere *inorganic and natural* condition of its own reproduction. The slave stands in no sort of relation to the objective conditions of his labour. It is rather labour itself, both in the form of the slave as of the serf, which is placed among the other living things (Naturwesen) as *inorganic condition* of production alongside the cattle or an appendage of the soil. . . .[7]

Hence, Vedic seers used the term 'dvi-pad' for a slave, meaning two-footed, an extension of the term 'catuṣ-pad', meaning four-footed. Dvi-pad is also used to denote man in general, e.g., Rks I.49.3, VIII.27.12, X.117.8. But in Rk III.62.14 invoking Soma, slaves are doubtlessly referred by that term – 'May soma give salutary food to our two-footed and four-footed cattle.' Rk 40* of the Atharva-vedic marriage hymn XIV.2 tells the bride as follows:

*See also the Rg-vedic mantra X.85.44.

40. Let Prajāpati generate progeny for you (two); Let Aryaman unite (sam-añj) [you] with days and nights; not ill-omened, enter thou this world of thy husband; be weal to our bipeds, weal to [our] quadrupeds.[8]

Kauṭalya in his Artha-śāstra (III.16) and Bṛhaspati in his law-book[9] leave no doubt as to the meaning of dvi-pad being a slave.[10]

Taittiriya Saṁhitā (II.2.6.3) refers to a slave as an animal with two rows of teeth (ubhayā-dat), and, significantly enough, uses the term 'puruṣa' to denote a slave:

The Tai.S.II.2.6.3 refers to the gift of a horse or a male (slave). 'He obtains a portion of himself who accepts (in gift) a being with two rows of teeth, (such as) a horse or a human male; on accepting an animal with two rows of teeth one should offer to Vaiśvānara a mess cooked on twelve potsherds. . . .'[11]

Slaves were branded as cattle,[12] though with the passage of time only the runaway ones came to receive that treatment. The slave Kaṭāhaka in Kaṭāhaka Jātaka (125) entertained such fear, but being blessed with a lenient master, he could get away with his escapade successfully. But the slave Kalaṇḍuka in the Kalaṇḍuka Jātaka (127) was less fortunate, and hence on being caught, was branded with a red hot iron.[13] In the Samanta-pasādikā we come across a freed man who was marked with a red hot iron. Even a woman who lost her liberty could be likewise branded.[14]

It seems that it was customary to call a slave 'puruṣa' as denoted by Pāṇini's rule IV.1.24. But, the term by which a slave came to be denoted most widely and permanently is dāsa. It is derived, according to Nirukta (II.17, VII.23), from the root 'das', meaning to exhaust or execute agricultural work. The etymology itself denotes that slavery in its origin was agrestic. What kinds of lands were worked by these agrestic Dāsa slaves? It has already been demonstrated that land remained under communal ownership up to the end of the oligarchic saṅgha-gana system, and that the communal raṣṭra land was originally temple land, or to be more precise, kaṭa land, belonging to the tribal mother goddess. There is evidence to show that Dāsas were put to work on such temple lands.

The hero of the Kaṭāhaka Jātaka (125) is a merchant's slave called Kaṭāhaka. The word is usually taken in the sense of a frying pan, the compound being understood to be composed of two words, kaṭa and a-han. Hata or hataka, the derivatives of han, had peculiar connotation in ancient times. Rāma calls himself in despair 'Rāma-hataka' in Bhavabhūti's Sanskrit drama 'Uttara-Rāma-carita' (Act I). The merchant Candana-dāsa in his monologue hatefully calls

Cāṇakya 'Cāṇakya-hataka' in 'Viśakha-datta's Sanskrit drama 'Mudra-Raksasa' (Act 3). Hataka means a low, vile person, most probably a slave. Cāṇakya Kauṭalya himself directs in his Artha-sastra as follows:

(b) A spy out to harm, through death, a person suspected of disloyalty to the king, should provoke him by calling him a slave and his wife, his daughter-in-law and his daughter, woman slave or wife.[15]

The most deadly abuse was to call one or his dear one a slave. Karṇa, in his tirade against the matrilineal Vāhīkas, said that the wanton Vāhīka women abused each other jestingly and shamelessly as 'hate' (murderer) and husband-slayer (VIII.44.14).

In this context the compound should be dissolved into kata and ahaka or ahataka. Āhataka is explained by Chanana as follows:

This word is found in the compound *bhataka-ahataka* and signifies a slave. It can be derived from the root hr and explained as 'one who has been brought' (see however PED, II-117). One could also link it with the Sanskrit word ahitaka, derive it from *dha* and understand it as denoting a mortgaged person.[16]

Bhataka (Sanskrit bhṛtaka) means a labourer who receives rice (bhatta, Sanskrit bhakta, Marathi bhāta), in lieu of wages.[17] Bhataka or bhṛtaka originally must have denoted not a free wage-labourer, but a slave. Anantha Krishna Iyer observes:

Though slavery has been abolished (in Kerala) many years ago, the name valliyal (a person receiving valli, i.e., paddy given to a slave) still survives.[18]

Hence, kaṭa-aha(ta)ka should be taken to mean a slave of kaṭa (temple) land. Patañjali, commenting on Pāṇini's rule 1.1.23, derives 'kaṭa-jaka' as kate jātaḥ, born in kata land.

Ceṭa or ceṭaka (male) and ceṭī or ceṭikā (female) were a kind of slaves. Chanana elaborates:

It signifies ordinarily a servant and a distinction is made between a *ceṭaka* and a slave. But in the Jataka, there is a slave born in the family, *dāso amajato*, who is called ceṭaka.[19]

Samaya-sundara, the commentator of the Jaina canon Kalpa-sūtra, defines ceṭa as 'pāda-mūlikā; dāsāḥ'. The word is evidently derived from the Pali cetiya (Sanskrit caitya), which has already been explained as the temple of a mother goddess. In the Vessantara Jātaka (547) we come across a country called Ceta, which lay between the

country of the Śibis (Western Punjab) and the Himalayas. Its capital was Mātula-nagara (city of maternal uncle). In the city 60,000 Khattiyas lived. They were called Ceta-puttas, and they were headed by elders called Ceta-pāmokkhas. The country had meat, wine, and rice in abundance. When Vessantara, the banished young prince of the Śibis, came to Mātula-nagara on his way to the mount Gandhamadana of the Himalayas, the elders of the ceta-puttas addressed him as 'deva', meaning 'your majesty', while he addressed the *elders* as 'samma' (Sanskrit saumya), a term by which a person younger or inferior than oneself was addressed. The elders requested him to stay there and rule them. Vessantara refused, fearing that the people would unnecessarily be visited by the wrath of the Śibis. Failing to persuade him, they then placed a ceta-putta as a guard on the entrance to the forest in which Vaśśantara chose to reside.[20] Ceta was evidently a temple land district of the Śibis who at that time were ruled by a priest-king called Sañjaya.

When the Brahmin Pūjaka, wishing to purchase the two children of Vessantara, tried to enter the forest, the ceta-putta exploded in anger:

> The ceta, who was wandering in the forest as a hunter, answered (Pūjaka) – 'O Brahmin, harassed by people like you and due to overgenerousness, the Khattiya (prince) has been banished from his kingdom, and now has been constrained to live on this mount (Vaṅka).
>
> 'Beheading you and wrenching out your heart, O Brahmin, I shall perform the sacrifice called "Pantha-sakuṇa" (auspicious path).
>
> 'I shall offer oblations, O Brahmin, with your flesh, fat and wrenched out heart.'[21]

Significant to note is the fact that Vessantara dwelt with his wife Maddī (daughter of the Madras) and children on the bank of a lotus-pond.[22]

Pūjaka, though a Brahmin, and honoured as such by the ceta-putta, is shown circumambulating round the ceta-putta.[23] It clearly denotes that the ceta-putta's person was sacred even to an elderly Brahmin like Pūjaka. It seems the sacred slaves of the caitya of the Śibis offered human sacrifices to their mother goddess. Male or female votaries of such caityas, who later came to be designated deva-dāsas or deva-dāsīs, meaning respectively male or female slaves of deities, when possessed by their respective deities, used to answer questions put to them by their interrogators. Chanana explains:

> (iii) *Deva-dasi*: This term is used only by Buddhaghosa, who utilises it to explain the term, *deva-panha*, 'divine interrogation'. According to him, 'The Buddha does not interrogate the Deva-dasi fallen under the spell of a god.' We can infer herefrom that the practice of consecrating *deva-dasis* was prevalent, at least in the time of Buddhaghosa. This custom of donating young virgin girls to a temple-god has been well known in India, although the Tipitaka does not mention it. Buddhaghosa has probably introduced a concept which was alien to the Buddhist circles. (The Pali texts describe the *Chetiyas* and not the temples. In one case we are told of a family which accepted to work as the slave of one such monument.)...[24]

We have already demonstrated that Caityas were not just monuments, but also temples of mother goddesses and their yakṣa consorts. Even monuments were the earliest form of temples; for the aboriginals in India, those who are the least affected by the religions of their civilised countrymen, as yet know no other worship than that of their fathers, of the hero-pillars of wood or stone. The developed form of this primeval worship has been depicted by Bhāsa in his Sanskrit drama 'Pratimā-nāṭaka'. In its third act, Bharata, on his way back to Ayodhyā, ignorant of his father's tragic death as a sequel to Rāma's banishment, comes across the deva-kula or the king's temple, nestling in a sacred grove on the outskirts of the capital. He is introduced to the stone statues of his ancestors, kings Dilipa, Raghu, and Aja, by the Brahmin priest called deva-kulika. Seeing king Daśaratha's statue, he asks the priest with a foreboding whether statues of living persons are also erected. He receives the reply that statues of only dead persons are erected. We come across a deva-kula also in Mṛcchakaṭika (Act II) where Saṁvāhaka is shown taking the place of the deity in mimicry.

Though Pali canons do not contain the word deva-dāsī, the institution as such is referred to in unmistakable terms by Kauṭalya in his Artha-śāstra:

> (h) (Persons or objects) brought from another territory by force (of arms) may be enjoyed after securing permission of the king, except persons born free or goods belonging to gods (e.g., temples), Brahmins and ascetics.
>
> (d) The king should have cotton spun by women who acquit themselves of their sentence by work...by royal women...slaves become old or by the retired *deva-dasis*.[25]

The slaves of the temple lands of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia were quartered near the temples.[26] The Indus cities Mohenjo-daro and Harappa had buildings (kārmānta)* similar to workhouses according

*Karmānta occurs in Rāmāyaṇa (II.101.52) and Artha-śāstra (II.17). It means agriculture, agricultural labourer and granary. Kulluka, commenting on Manu VII.62, says: Karmāntaḥ iksu-dhānya-ādi-saṅgraha-sthānam.

to Kosambi:

> ...There were enormous granaries, too large to be in private possession. They were accompanied by small tenement houses in regular blocks which must have accommodated the special class of workers or slaves who pounded and stored the grain....[27]

In Buddha's time there were whole village of slaves (dāsa-gāma).[28] Patañjali, commenting on Pāṇini's rule IV.2.104, mentions a village called Dāsa-rūpya in the Vāhīka country.

The tradition of feeding slaves from communal granaries persisted even up to the Smṛti times. The Brahminical law-givers enjoin that a Śūdra 'guest' should be fed by persons of the higher castes by drawing upon the grain of royal granaries. One of the earliest of them, Āpastamba, lays down:

> 19. If a Śūdra comes as a guest (to a Brāhmaṇa) he shall give him some work to do. He may feed him, after (that work has been performed).
> 20. Or the slaves (of the Brāhmaṇa householder) shall fetch (rice) from the royal store, and honour the Śūdra as a guest.
> [20. 'Hence it is known that the king ought to keep stores of rice and the like in every village, in order to show hospitality to Śūdra guests.' Haradatta.][29]

Uṣas, as already explained, was the daughter of heaven of the Asura theocratic monarchical state of the Indus. Rk I.124.1 indicates that at each daybreak slaves of her temple land were sent out to labour. We give Griffith's rendering with a single emendation put in brackets; but it radically changes the whole meaning:

> The Dawn refulgent where the fire is kindled, and the sun rising, far diffuse their brightness.
> Savitar, God, hath sent (for) us forth to labour, each quadruped, each biped, to be active.[30]

Rk I.92.8 leaves no doubt as to the identity of these bipeds. They were the Dāsa-pravarga, the tribal moiety of slaves:

> O Thou who shinest forth in wondrous glory, urged onward by thy strength, auspicious lady,
> Dawn, may (we) gain that wealth, renowned and ample, in brave sons, (moiety of) slaves, farfamed...horses.[31]

Rk I.124.12 goes on to say that these temple slaves, desiring to secure their slaves' fare, leave for work, while their masters stay at home:

> As birds fly forth (from their nests), human beings, desirous of securing their (slaves') share of food, leave their (slaves') quarters at dawn. (But) O devī Uṣas, you give manifold wealth to those who stay at home.

The word 'kināśa' occurs in the Ṛg-vedic hymn invoking the lord of the field and Sītā (IV.57.8). The word is usually taken in the sense of a tribal peasant, as it is used to denote the divine peasants, the Maruts, in the Atharva-vedic Ṛk VI.30.1. In the Puruṣa sacrifice a kināśa is offered to Irā. Irā, according to Nighaṇṭu (II.7.12), means food, and according to Vajasaneyi Saṁhitā XXX.11, it means the earth. The kināśa in the Atharva-vedic hymn invoking the draft-ox (IV.11) does not at all seem to be a free tribal peasant. A free rendering of the tenth Ṛk of the hymn is as follows:

> With trudging feet and straining thighs he turns up the earth (irām). The draft ox and the kināśa thus labour to raise food.

Kauṭalya directs that goddess Sītā should be invoked when the sowing season begins on the Sītā crown lands (II.40). Crown lands were cultivated by slave labour. Manu (IX.150) lays down that the Brahmin son of a Brahmin father should receive his share in the ancestral property as follows:

> 150. The (slave) [kināśo] who tills (the field), the bull kept for impregnating cows, the vehicle, the ornaments, and the house shall be given as an additional portion to the Brāhmaṇa (son), and one most excellent share.[32]

Thus it becomes clear that the Sītā temple lands of early Vedic times were worked by agrestic slaves called Kināśas. As late as the twenty-fifth to twenty-fourth centuries B.C., temple lands engaged thirty per cent of the entire population of the Lagas district of ancient Mesopotamia.[33]

Sītā, before it became king's privately owned land, in contradistinction to rāṣṭra, the land communally owned by his subjects, was a synonym of kaṭa, the temple land. Though clan had already disintegrated into joint families before the imperial Mauryas came to power (Artha-śāstra, III.60), they preserved some of the most important features of the temple-land economy in their Sītā. Though Sītā, in its Mughal version, was an attempt of the feudal kings to reduce their dependence on their vassals, as Kosambi correctly explains,[34] the Sītā of the Mauryas was also their attempt to endow themselves with the halo of the priest-kings of the slave era. Failure to understand these distinguishing characteristics of the Maurya Sita,

namely, the former one separating it from pre-feudal social formations, and the latter linking it with them, has led historians and scholars to draw conclusions which are totally opposed to each other. Dealing with the bloody victory gained by Aśoka over the Kaliṅgas, Kosambi observes:

> (RE.13) When king Piyadasi Beloved-of-the-gods had been anointed eight years, the country of the Kalingas was conquered by him; 150,000 in number were the men who were deported (*apavuḍhe*) thence. 100,000 in number were those who were slain there, and many times as many those who died.
>
> The people were carried off (*apavuḍhe*) not into slavery but for settlement upon crown lands, as we know from the older *Arthaśāstra* policy; specifically, the verb is so used in Arth. 2.1, 7.1, 7.16, 9.4, 13.5. . . .[35]

Kosambi is guided unconsciously in this philogical argument by his formulation that proto-feudalism began in the lifetime of Buddha himself[36] and that slavery vanished as a mode of production with the Mauryas and that the free Śūdra pesantry became the sole food-producing class.[37] As shall be explained later on, this is the basic characteristic of Asian feudalism. Kosambi, with all his attempts to the contrary, has inadvertently accepted one of the basic formulations of Dange:

> . . .I consider that the slave states flourished till about the rise and growth of Buddhism. Most probably, the empire of the Nandas (413 B.C.) was the last in that line (hence, it is, perhaps, that all the puranic traditions state that the real *kshatriya kula* rule as such ended with the Nandas, *Nandantam, Kshatriyakulam*).
>
> Between the Nandas and the Empire of Asoka (273 B.C.) big changes were taking place in the socio-economic organisation of the Indian people. Both slavery and the village community were undergoing radical change. Indian feudalism was trying to strike its roots and spread.[38]

Chanana draws diametrically opposite conclusion, namely, that slavery reached its climax during the Maurya regime as a result of the destruction of the oligarchic saṅgha-gaṇas by the monarchies:

> The political-military defeat of these oligarchic regimes must have brought about certain changes inasmuch as the slave-system existing under monarchic rule must have found extension. Henceforth no group of people could be considered as being *dasas* by nature and slavery could have existed only as a function of economic factors or of facts which could be influenced by such factors. . . .
>
> If the extension of the monarchical system has in this manner influenced and modified the institution of slavery, by setting in motion a process of uniformity, it is quite reasonable to suppose that the establishment of the Mauryan empire must have transformed this institution still further. This is how we can interpret the restrictions envisaged by Kautalya against the abduction of persons by effecting raids. After the political unification of the country, such raids became inconceivable. . . .
>
> On the other hand, this political unification puts into stride a process encouraging and facilitating the economic unification of the country and the development of a nationwide commerce. This favours the rise of towns and reinforces the economic power of the rich merchants. Now we know that the Setthis had interest both in the countryside and in town. They owned land, sometimes entire villages – these latter being under the charge of their slaves or were given on lease to tenants. It is quite logical that this method of land-cultivation by means of slave labour became normal. Besides, we know that this institution was not abolished under the Mauryans and that it continued to flourish. Therefore, debt-slavery, slavery due to famine, slavery due to war and due to inheritance, etc., continued to exist although slavery due to raid was no longer tolerated. During the reign of Asoka, the war on Kalinga supplied thousands of slaves and at least a part of them must have reached the Magadhan market.[39]

Was the Sītā of the Mauryas worked by slaves or not? Kosambi thinks that if the answer is given in the affirmative his thesis of feudalism replacing slavery decisively during the reign of the Mauryas would fall to the ground, and hence he has recourse to philology instead of history, while Chanana finding the answer to be in the affirmative is led to conclude that slavery reached its utmost possible development in India during the Mauryan period and that feudalism arose after the disintegration of the Mauryan empire into small kingdoms as a result of which commercial latifundia slave economy disappeared,[40] as if small states could be inimical to slave economy, and the sole criterion of the rise of feudalism.

Crown lands, prevalent under whatever designation, were never meant to, nor could, maintain the state machine of feudal India. Their sole economic and political function was to reduce the dependence of the feudal kings on their vassals. Hence, it is incorrect to define the basic character of a social formation exclusively on the basis of the class or classes that worked these crown lands. Nevertheless, as Sītā would help us to reconstruct that pre-feudal past, which otherwise seems to have been irretrievably lost, we will have to investigate the Sītā more closely than hithertofore.

Sītā is defined by Kauṭalya as follows (II.31):

> The grain brought in (from the crown lands into the royal granary) by the superintendent of the crown lands is Sītā.

Sītā here is the designation of not only the crown lands, but also of

the yield accruing from them. These lands were tilled by slaves and labourers (II.40):

(k) On fields belonging to himself (the king), and ploughed by many ploughs, he will have the sowing done by slaves, servants and by those who work in lieu of some punishment. . . .[41]

Artha-śāstra (III.60) includes even the wife of a share-cropper of crown lands: ardha-sitikā, in the list of female slaves.

Vidhura Jātaka (546) tells us that in a slave-worked temple land (kaṭa) or communal rāṣṭra land economy, one could either be a member of the ruling tribe or of its slave tribe. The yakṣa Puṇṇaka, after defeating king Dhanañjaya of the Kurus in the game of dice, demanded from him his kattā (rendered by the prose text as the Chief Minister) Vidhura. The king answered that he was free to dispose of anything belonging to him, but could not give away the Kattā, as the Kattā was not his property. Puṇṇaka then posed the problem before Vidhura himself:

Do the gods speak the truth in declaring that (if) there is a person among the Kurus who truely adheres to the religion, it is Vidhura? This name Vidhura that is spoken of by the people, what is it? Is Vidhura a slave of the king or his tribesman?[42]

Vidhura prefaced his answer by enumerating the four categories of slaves that were prevalent then:

Some people are slaves because they are born in (a tribe of) temple-land slaves (āmāya-dāsa); some become slaves (as a result of) being purchased by money; some become slaves voluntarily; some embrace slavery through fear.*[43]

These are the four categories of slaves (that are prevalent among men). It is certain that I am a slave by birth. The king may prosper or decline, but I will not swerve from truth. Even at the farthest distance, I shall remain a slave of his majesty. Hence, O Brahmin youth, the king is entitled by law to dispose of me (in whatsoever manner he deems fit).[48]

The classic illustration of agrestic communal slavery is furnished by

*Murderers of co-tribesmen became fugitives from tribal vendetta and sought sanctuary in other tribes. Vedic times knew them by various epithets, e.g., vira-hatya and vira-han.[44] Some became slaves through natural calamity, e.g., famine, epidemic, etc. . . . Hundreds of people in Kerala used to sell themselves in a famine.[45] Vinaya-pitaka[46] describes how numerous people, even affluent amongst them, offered themselves to become voluntary slaves of the Magadhan physician Jīvaka Komārabhacca if he cured them of their incurable and deadly diseases.[47] Slave of war falls under this category.

matrilineal Kerala. Menon says:

. . .The institution of slavery in Malabar, like all institutions there, is attributed to Paraśu Rāma, who is said to have organised the slave caste as a provision for agriculture, when he gave the country to the Brahmins. Historically there can be no doubt that it rose out of the conquest of the original owners of the soil by the invaders and settlers from the north. The term Cheramakkal or Cherman, the caste name of the slave caste, clearly denotes the origin of predial slavery in Malabar. It means 'sons of the soil', cher = soil and makkal = issue. . . .[49]

Slavery in Kerala was exclusively agrestic:

Slaves in Malabar were originally, exclusively agrestic, domestic slavery being almost unknown. On account of the law of the caste pollution, they could not enter the houses of their masters and minister to their wants personally. . . .[50]

He enumerates the work they had to do:

. . .According to Mr. Baber, their (slaves') employment is always in agricultural pursuits. These, however, were not confined to manuring, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, hoeing, reaping and threshing, but they are likewise employed in fencing, tending and watching the cattle, and even in carrying the agricultural produce, it being not customary to use carts and cattle in the transportation to market; and when harvest is over, in felling trees and preparing materials for house-building etc., and this without intermission of a single day so long as the master can find employment for them.[51]

Thus the Dāsas of the Indus and Cheramakkals or Cherмans of Kerala both were agrestic slaves etymologically. *The law of caste pollution or taboo on intercourse between slaves and their masters, which otherwise would have made allowance for household slavery, is not the cause but the effect of ethnic or rather tribal inimicability harboured by every tribe against all other tribes.*

Menon explains the three categories into which the slaves in Kerala were classified as follows:

(1) Certain castes are considered to be born slaves, such as the Pulayers, Parayers, Veṭṭuvās, Vēṭars, etc. These are all attached to the soil and are said to be born in bondage. . . .

(2) Slavery was imposed as a form of punishment. It was principally reserved for females reprieved from execution. Those of higher castes who were convicted of caste offences of a serious nature were put out of caste and condemned to be slaves. A Brahmin woman found guilty of adultery becomes the Raja's slave. So also a low caste woman and her high class paramour if found guilty. A Brahmin convicted of theft had to go into bondage.

(3) Felons and criminals liable to capital punishment were sold into slavery.... In time of famine, parents sold their children for the sake of sustenance to those who were able to support them. Forbes refers to this practice in his day: 'The number of poor people who came down to Anjengo and the other sea-ports, from the inland country during a famine, either to sell themselves, or to dispose of their children as slaves, is astonishing. During my residence at Anjengo, there was no famine, nor any unnatural scarcity of rain, but during the rainy season many were weekly brought down from the mountains to be sold on the coast.'[52]

The first category of Jenmam slaves makes it clear beyond doubt that slavery in Kerala was communal, i.e., an advanced agricultural tribe enslaving a whole tribe or tribes as agrestic slaves. Though they lost their freedom as a tribe, they were put to work on the basis of their tribal constituents, and they were free to live their unfree life on tribal pattern! It has already been shown that up to the turn of the present century, land in Kerala was owned by the matrilineal taravād or phratry, while it was actually tilled and its produce enjoyed by the matrilineal tāvaḷis or clans constituting that phratry. Just as the Kartā (Karanaver) supervised the agricultural operations on behalf of the taravād or tavaḷi in the same manner the agrestic slaves of the clan were led in their labours by their chief or headman:

...The agricultural year commences with Vishu which falls on the first of Mēṭam (April-May). The village astrologer or kaṇiyān is consulted to fix an auspicious day for turning of the first sod of the season on which day the master of the house provides himself with a variety of seeds in small baskets made of the leaves of the kāñiram (nux vomica). These are placed in the yard beside a lighted lamp and a heap of rice. A pair of bullocks as also a new plough-share fastened to a plough are brought, and these are adorned with rice flour mixed with water. These are then carried to the field in procession where the headman of the Pulayan or agrestic slaves raises a small mound of earth whereon some manure and seeds are thrown. The cattle are then yoked to the plough and a square piece of ground is ploughed. A few furrows are made and care is taken that the plough is dropped towards the right side. As at every ceremony, god Ganapati is invoked and offerings made to him, after which the master sows the seed in the furrows already made, the head Pulaya in the meanwhile praying for a good season, a plentiful harvest and health and prosperity to his master and his family. A coconut is then broken on the plough-share and according as it breaks into exact halves or otherwise, the nature of the forthcoming harvest is predicted....[53]

This account by Menon leaves out one important detail recorded by Thurston and Rangachari. After raising of the mound by the headman of Chefmans, the authors go on to say:

...the cattle are then yoked and one turn is ploughed by the head of Cheruman. Inside this at least seven furrows are made....[54]

The ritual of raising a mound and sowing seeds broadcast in it preserves intact the agricultural reality of matriarchal times. This significant part of the 'vappa-maṅgala' denotes that up to that time agricultural work was done without buffaloes or bullocks, it was exclusively in the hands of females; but with the intervention of draught animals, it was taken over by males, soon to be succeeded by male slaves.

When Vidhura was to leave Indra-prastha with his new master, the Yakṣa Puṇṇaka, he called together his clansmen, phratrymen, and tribesmen.[55] They constituted his ñati-saṅgha, meaning tribe.[56] Hence he is repeatedly designated by the gāthās as Kurūnaṁ katta-seṭṭho, the compound meaning the chief of the Kartās of the communal agrestic slaves of the Kurus.[57] He instructed his assembled tribesmen before he parted from them:

(You) should diligently work in the (communal or tribal) threshing floor, granary and fields. (You) should draw minimum of grain (rations) and cook still lesser amount at home.[58]

King Dhanañjaya is called by Vidhura by the epithet Kuru-khetta-vāsī, meaning one living in the communal rāṣṭra land of the Kurus.[59] It was he who fed, clothed, and housed the communal slaves on behalf of the Kurus:

Who gives us bedding, clothes, (food and) drink, shelter and home and who like (the god of) rain showers, all beings with wish-fulfillments....[60]

The settlement of Vidhura's tribe is called 'mahā-ghara', meaning 'great house'.[61] Apparently, it was a settlement similar to the workhouses of the Indus cities. The name of his daughter is given as Cetā,[62] which should mean, as already explained, 'deva-dāsī'. He addresses his wife Anojjā as 'bhoti' (Sanskrit 'bhavati'), which was a honorific reserved only for tribal mothers or brahma-vādinis. Village deities were called 'ajjā'.[63] Vidhura is said to have been the son of the Brahmin Candra, evidently meaning that he was a human representative of the Moon god. The Yakṣa Puṇṇaka takes Vidhura away to sacrifice him to Vimalā, the wife of Varuṇā, the king of the Nāgas.[64] It should be noted that Vimalā (apparently the Earth goddess in relation to Varuna, who is a form of the

Moon* and is called by the gāthā 1643 as Bhūmin dhara, bearer of the earth) bade her divine consort to bring the heart of Vidhura for fulfilling her longing of pregnancy.[65] It has already been mentioned that the Ceta-putta of Vessantara Jātaka wanted to perform the sacrifice called Pantha-sakuṇa to the mother goddess of the Śibis by offering as oblation the heart of the Brahmin Pūjaka. Why the heart of all organs? Caraka and Suśruta, the great ācāryas of the Indian medical science (Āyurveda), and Aristotle, the greatest of Greek philosophers, thought that heart was the seat of consciousness,[66] equivalent to mind (manas), and, according to Puruṣa-sūkta (X.90.13), moon was produced from the mind of the sacrificed Puruṣa Brahman. The longing of Vimalā, the earth mother, to eat the heart of Vidhura, the son of the Brahmin Candra, was but the fertility magic by performing which she desired to generate the Moon god himself.

Baber, a former collector of Malabar, brilliantly observes:

> . . .of agrestic or predial slavery, . . .the origin is of very remote antiquity; the general term of the description of slavery is *atima*, or literally as I understand the term, serf, aboriginal or indigenous, being held previously under the same term as the land itself throughout, under some slight modifications.[67]

The Atharva-vedic hymns IX.4 and 7 are entitled 'Ṛṣabha-sava' and 'Anuḍut-sava' respectively. They are recited in the sacrifice of bulls broken to plough. The seer of these hymns is Brahman. The bulls are repeatedly invoked as Bṛhaspati. The big animals were domesticated and tended exclusively by men. Hence, when land began to be cultivated by buffaloes and bullocks, it is but natural that female labour in agriculture was displaced by male labour.** The Brahmanhood of men was transferred to the male buffalo and bullock. The menfolk of matriarchal tribe after this period seem to have been called 'sitikas', those who tilled the communal rāṣṭra-sītā land, and because they impregnated the communal land with their semen virile by inserting their ploughs in her womb and lived on the outcome of it, they came to be called 'sva-vīrya-upajīvins'. Both these words are used by Kauṭalya in the chapter entitled Sītā-adhyakṣa (superintendent of the crown lands) of his Artha-śāstra. It was out of these 'sva-vīrya-upajīvins' that the mother goddess or her human representative selected the most virile and handsome Brahman consort on condition of taking his semen virile as her fee (vīrya-śulka). But with the advent of communal slavery, the impregnators of the earth became not the menfolk of the ruling tribe, but the menfolk of the enslaved tribe, and hence in order to conform with this changed relationship, the function of Brahman kartāship was bound to be transferred to the Brahman kartā of the enslaved tribe. This change brought about by communal slavery, i.e., transferring the *de facto* kartāhood to the slave brahman instead of the free brahman, came as a god-send. The free brahman could live, and the slave brahman could be sacrificed periodically instead. The subservient relationship of the male towards the female in matriarchal society in general and the servile relationship of the Brahman sacred consort towards the Rāṣṭri-devī in particular, was now projected into the slave relationships of the enslaved tribe towards the enslaving tribe in general and of the slave Brahman kartā to the rāṣṭri-devī, now transmuted into the mother goddess of the ruling tribe in particular. *The two varṇa system of the classless matriarchal society was now transformed into the three varṇa system of the matrilineal class society.*

It is this internal contradiction between the two sexes within a matriarchal agricultural tribe giving birth to the external contradiction between an enslaving matrilineal agricultural tribe and an enslaved matrilineal tribe that is reflected in the famous story of Kadrū and Suparṇī as narrated by Taittirīya Saṁhitā (VI.1.6):

> Kadrū and Suparṇi had a dispute (for the stake of) each other's form. Kadrū defeated Suparṇi. She said, 'In the third heaven from here is the Soma: fetch it, and by it buy your release.' Kadrū is this (earth), Suparṇī yonder (heaven), the descendents of Suparṇī the metres. She said, 'For this do parents rear children; "In the third heaven from here is the Soma: fetch it and by it buy your release" [1], so has Kadrū said to me.' The Jagati flew up, of fourteen syllables, but returned without obtaining it; it lost two syllables, but returned with the (sacrificial) animals and consecration. Therefore the Jagati is the richest in cattle of the metres, and consecration waits upon a man who is rich in cattle. The Triṣṭubh flew up, of thirteen syllables, but returned without obtaining it; it lost two syllables, but returned with the (sacrificial) gifts [2] and penance. Therefore in the world of the Triṣṭubh, the midday oblation, the gifts are brought. 'That in truth is penance,' they say, 'if a man gives his wealth.' The Gāyatrī flew up, of four syllables, together with a female goat with light. Then the goat won (Soma) for her, . . .[68]

Mahābharata has expanded this story into fourteen adhyāyas (I.20-

*According to Śatpatha Brāhmaṇa (II.4.4.18), Varuṇa is the waxing moon.

**Ṛṣi-pañcami, which falls on the fifth day of the bright half of Bhādrapada, is observed as a 'vrata' by women exclusively. Food raised by 'hand-labour' and not by the labour of bullocks, is partaken. Hand-labour means female labour.

34), but it has deleted the characterisation of Kadrū as the earth and Suparṇi as the heaven. The allegorical tale reflects an ancient reality. As already explained in the second chapter, Kadrū and Suparṇi, or Prthivi and Dyau, were the two moieties (pakṣas or vargas), representing the female and male sexes respectively of the post-horde stage of human society in India. When the post-horde human group develops into a tribe, the function of the two moieties, their promiscuous copulation representing the union of the cosmic moieties of earth and heaven, becomes the magical function of the tribal mother and her periodical Brahman consort representing the earth mother and the moon god respectively. It is only when a matriarchal agricultural tribe is in a position to procure agricultural surplus product with the most primitive tools permissible as in the riparian civilisation, and when draught animals have enabled its males to displace its females in agricultural production, that the internal relation of Kadrū-Rāṣṭrī and Saparni-Brahman is externally projected into the relation of the enslaving Kadrū tribe-cum-moiety and the enslaved Suparṇi tribe-cum-moiety. The internal vargas (moieties) of the tribe then externally manifest themselves into the vargas (classes) of masters and slaves.

This epochal change is not without its projection on the divine plane. The Buddhist canon Digha-nikāya shows that the tribe of Gandharvas was the slave of the tribe of Devas.[69]

We shall demonstrate in Chapter 13 that Śūdra slavery was also a form of communal slavery, though having its own distinguishing characteristics. Apart from this slavery of the Brahminic four caste society, historical illustrations of Dāsa slavery in its communal form during the vast period streching from the Indus society to the matrilineal Kerala society are few and far between.

The Mahābhārata version of Sāntā-Ṛṣyaśṛṅga story (III.110.113) provides us with the first illustration. The land and the cattle of the Aṅgas were tilled and tended by communal slaves; for, when the enraged father of the Brahman Ṛṣyaśṛṅga speeds towards the capital of the Aṅgas in search of his son, at every halting place on the way he is received by these communal slaves with the words (III.113.13):

> These cattle and agricultural implements belong to your son. What should we do to gratify you, O great sage? We are your self-declared slaves!

In the royal consecration of Yudhiṣṭhira, king Śiśu-pāla of the Cedis, upbraiding Bhiṣma for proposing Kṛṣṇa for the honour of agra-pūjā, alleges that Kṛṣṇa being the slave of king Kaṁsa of the Bhojas

(Bhojasya puruṣe), chief of the communal slaves of the Bhojas (varga-pāle II.44.26), a Dāsa and a non-king (II.45.4), he was unfit for the supreme reverence. From this it becomes clear that the gopas who tended the cattle and tilled the land of the Bhoja-Yādava oligarchs, were their communal slaves. Kṛṣṇa complains to the sage Nārada that in the name of rulership he is being constrained to do the work of a communal slave (XII.81.5).

Yudhiṣṭhira staked and lost to the Kauravas the Pāṇḍava clan, their communal slaves, all wealth, and the jana-pada itself (II.65). In Udyoga-parva (30.39) Yudhiṣṭhira enquires through Sañjaya whether the male and female communal slaves of the Kurus were faring well. The Pāṇḍavas caught the defeated Jayad-ratha, king of the Sindhus (III.272), and Su-śarman, king of the Tri-gartas (IV.33), and made both of them undergo the rite of shaving their heads in five parts and declaring in the tribal assembly that they were slaves. This ritual was called 'yuddha-jito vidhiḥ', i.e., the ritual of enslaving war prisoners. Such slaves were apparently communal slaves.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV.4.3) tells us that pleased with the metaphysics of soul expounded by Yājñavalkya, king Janaka of the Videhas exclaimed – '. . .I will give you, noble sir, the Videhas and myself also to be your slaves'.[70] Though it is a gesture, still it reflects the reality that the prosperity and the resulting leisure for metaphysical speculation, for which the Videhas had become famous, was made possible by their communal slaves.

The classic illustration comes from the Śākya oligarchy from which Buddha hailed. The Śākyas and the Koliyas lived on the opposite banks of the river Rohiṇi. The diversion weir that irrigated the lands of both the tribal oligarchies was their common property. Once on a time when the crops of both the tribes were perishing due to a drought, their communal slaves came to abuses and blows over the distribution of the dwindled water of the river. Their respective masters came to know about the strife only from their respective slaves. The first thing they thought of doing was to rush to their side of the bank of the river in order to vindicate their honour by armed conflict. Buddha, sitting between both the armies, asked the cause of the congregation on Rohiṇi. The oligarchs replied that they had come there neither for a festive visit nor for sport, but for battle. It means that these Khattiyas (lords of fields) visited the river not for inspecting how their communal lands were irrigated, but only for festivities and sports.[71]

The only connection which these Khattiya oligarchs had with

D. C. P. R. I. Pune-6.

agriculture was the festival of sowing (vappa-maṅgala) at which they ritually put their hands to gaily decked ploughs and described some furrows to inaugurate the great agricultural season. It was one of the rare occasions on which their slaves and servants got a break in their ceaseless toil, applied unguents, wore garlands and new clothes, and snatched some hours of merry-making.[72]

That all the agricultural work was done by their communal slaves becomes clear from the story of Anuruddha, a cousin of Buddha, who became one of the most distinguished of his monks:

> Now there were two brothers, Mahānāma the Sākyan and Anuruddha the Sākyan. Anuruddha the Sākyan was delicately nurtured and he had three-storeyed residences, one for the cold season, one for the hot season and one for the season of rains. During the four months spent in the residence for the season of the rains, he was waited upon by women performing music, and came not down from the upper storey of his residence.
>
> Then Mahānāma the Sākyan thought, 'Now the most distinguished of the young men of the Sākya clan have already renounced the world in imitation of the Blessed One, but from our family (kulā) no one has gone forth from the household life into the houseless state. Let therefore either I, or Anuruddha, renounce the world.' And he went to Anuruddha the Sākyan and said [so to him, adding] 'Either therefore do you go forth, or I will do so.'
>
> 'I am delicate. It is impossible for me to go forth from the household life into houseless state. Do you do so.'
>
> 2. 'But come now, O beloved Anuruddha, I tell you what is incident to the household life. First, you have to get your fields ploughed (kasāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get them sown (vapāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the water led down over them (udakaṁ abhinetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the water led off again (udakaṁ ninnetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the weeds pulled up (niddhāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the crop reaped (lavāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the crop carried away (ubbahāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get it arranged into bundles (puñjaṁ kārāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get it trodden out (maddāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the straw picked out (palālaṁ uddharāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get all the chaff removed (bhusikā uddharāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get it winnowed (opunāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to get the harvest gathered (atiharāpetabbaṁ). When that is done, you have to do, just the same the next year, and the same all over again the year after that.'
>
> 'Is the work never over? Does one ever see the end of one's labour? When shall our work be over? When shall we see the end of our labour? When shall we, still possessing and retaining the pleasures of our five senses, yet dwell at rest?'
>
> 'Yes! the work, beloved Anuruddha, is never over; no end appears to our labour. Even when our fathers and forefathers had completed their time, even then was their work unfinished.'
>
> 'Then do you take thought for the household duties.' I will go forth from the household life into the houseless state.'"[73]

All the verbs describing the various stages of agricultural work are in the causal. Whole of the productive work was done by communal slaves and servants and the delicate Khattiya oligarch was horrified at the very thought of supervising the labour, and preferred to renounce the world.

Who were the communal slaves of the Śākyas? The tribe of Nāga-muṇḍa aboriginals. The story of Vāsabha-khattiyā and her son Vidūḍbha, occurring in Bhaddasāla Jātaka (465), discloses the extent to which the Khattiya oligarchs had relations of commensality with their slaves. King Pasenadi of Kosala wanted to marry a daughter of the Śākya oligarchs. The Śākyas observed strict endogamy; but refusal would have meant enmity with their suzerain. Mahānāma, the same elder brother of Anuruddha, thought of a way out. He had a beautiful daughter called Vāsabha-khattiyā by his female slave Nāga-Muṇḍā. He proposed to his co-oligarchs to pass her off as his legitimate daughter. The royal messenger already had been warned of such an eventuality, and hence he demanded that Mahānama take food in the same dish with Vāsabha-khattiyā. Mahānāma called his daughter to take food with him in the same dish, but when he had taken the first morsel, an urgent letter from another country demanding his immediate attention was brought to him according to predetermined plan, and withdrawing his hand, he pretended to read the letter, while Vāsabha-khattiyā finished the meal alone. The ruse worked, and she became the favourite queen of the king. She gave birth to Vidūḍabha. When he grew to be of seven years, he saw that all his playmates received presents from their maternal grandfather's houses, while he never had any. When he came of age he decided to visit the Śākyas, and disregarding the efforts of his mother to dissuade him, he reached Kapila-vastu with his royal retinue. The elder Śākyas sent all those Śākyas younger than Vidūḍabha outside the capital in order to save them from the humiliation of saluting their elder but slave kinsman, and received the prince with all the hunour and pomp due to the heir of the Kosala kingdom. Gratified, Vidūḍabha started back for Śrāvastī. A soldier from his retinue, who had forgotten one of his weapons, returned to the motehall of the Śākyas, and saw the seat where Vidūḍabha used to sit being washed by a female slave of the

Śākyas with milk and water and heard her roundly abusing the prince – 'It is here that the son of that female slave called Vāsabha-khattiyā used to sit!' With his return to the retinue it became a talk of the whole camp and in due course reached the ears of the king. The enraged monarch banished the mother and the son to the slaves' quarters. Buddha pacified him with the argument that paternal descent being the only thing that counted, Vāsabha-khattiyā was a princess from her father's side, and restored her and the prince to their former position. When Vidūḍabha usurped the throne, he put every Śākya to sword, not sparing even breast-feeding infants and washed the same seat in the mote-hall of the Śākyas with the blood of his messacred Śākya kinsmen.[74]

This was the state of commensality between masters and slaves in these non-Brahminic Khattiya republics. These ideas of commensality were not conditioned exclusively by the slave system. The foundation of these ideas was laid by the inborn conceptions of tribal inimicability that have characterised tribal peoples all over the world, while slavery only accentuated these conceptions to the utmost extent possible. This tribal inimicability was consecrated by the ritual called initiation. No adult khattiya of these republics could attain to full membership of his tribe unless he took a ritual bath (abhiseka) in its sacred lotus pond. Such a lotus pond of the Vajjis was in Vaiśālī and it was called 'abhiseka-maṅgala-pokkharaṇī'. When Bandhula the Malla, commander-in-chief of the Kosala king Pasenadi, took his wife Mallikā to bathe her in this pokkharaṇī in order to fulfil her pregnant longing, he found it heavily guarded by armed men and secured with an iron grating so that not even birds could take a dip in it.[75] Such a pokkharaṇī of the Śākyas was called 'deva-daha'. Commenting on the Deva-daha-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya, the Aṭṭha-kathā says:

> Kings are called 'deva'. Here the Śākya kings had their beautiful maṅgala-pokkharaṇī, which was guarded (by armed men). Because it was the daha (pokkharaṇī) of the devas, it came to be called deva-daha.[76]

Those who had taken this initiatory bath were called 'mūrdha-abhisikta' Khattiyas. Such Khattiyas with their kinsmen (ñāti-sālohitā) formed the ruling tribes of these republics. Pānini's rules IV.1.168 to IV.1.173 lay down that the designation by which a member of a tribe was known was formed by the name of that tribe or the country of that tribe taking suffixes called tad-rājas in the technical language, e.g., Pañcāla is the name of a tribe as well as the country inhabited by that tribe. The word denoting a member or a son of that

tribe is formed by Pañcāla taking its tad-rāja suffix añ as a result of which it becomes Pāñcāla. Commenting on Pāṇini's rule IV.1.168, Patañjali states that though the members or sons of the Kṣudraka and Mālava tribes are called Kṣaudrakyas and Mālavyas respectively according to the rule, these epithets are not permitted to the slaves and craftsmen of these tribes. Even a Brahmin living in the Pañcāla country in the pre-oligarchic period could call himself Pāñcāli and not Pāñcāla, while in the oligarchic period he also was not allowed to bear even the tribal designation denoting his varṇa. This tribal inimicability vis-a-vis communal slaves was a characteristic not only of the Mālavyas and the Kṣaudrakyas, but of all oligarchic republics.

It may be argued that this state of affairs was a product of the period of the oligarchic republics and not of the monarchies or the societies that preceded these republics. Similar initiation ritual must have prevailed even in the pre-oligarchic days, an evidence of which we come across in Mahābhārata. Urged by Draupadī, Bhīma went in search of the origin of the celestial lotus that had been wafted to her by a strong wind. When he reached his destination, he found that it was the lotus pond (puṣkariṇī) of Kubera, the god of wealth and the king of the Gandharvas, the Yaksas and the Rakṣases (III.153.1-2):

> After reaching the vicinity of mount Kailāsa and close to the palace of Kubera, he beheld amidst a sacred grove a beautiful lotus pond that was fed by mountain streams and heavily guarded by Rakṣases.

The divine abhiseka-maṅgala-pokkharaṇi of the tribe of gandharvas, yakṣas, and rakṣases was but an inverted reflection of the reality existing in the pre-oligarchic period. Ritual bath in such sacred tribal pokkharaṇis meant that the person had died as a child and non-member, and was reborn as an adult and full member of that non-Brahminic tribe.

The initiation ritual (upanayana) of the four caste Brahminic society enabled a person to become a member of that Brahminic tribe, in the absence of which he was a potential Śūdra, and if the age limit prescribed was past, the person, though hailing from the three higher castes, was downgraded to the Śūdra caste.[77] Only the three higher castes of Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas were entitled to Vedic saṁskāras, while Śūdras were precluded from them. Whatever rituals were conceded to them could be performed by them without uttering mantras, i.e., silently. Kane sums up:

> ...A śruti text reads (the Creator) created the brāhmaṇa with Gāyatrī

(metre), the rājanya with triṣṭubh, the vaiśya with Jagati, but he did not create the śūdra with any metre; therefore the śūdra is known to be unfit for the saṁskāra (of upanayana). The study of the Veda follows after upanayana of only three classes – 'one should perform upanayana for a brāhmaṇa in spring, for a rājanya in summer and in śarad (autumn) for a vaiśya'. Not only was the śūdra not to study the Veda, but Veda study was not to be carried on in his presence. . . .[78]

Turning to modern times, apart from the Cheṟamakkal Pulayas of Kerala, Paraiyas and Holeyas were classified as major slave castes in the rest of Dravida India. Thurston and Rangachari observe:

Paraiyans are to be found throughout the Tamil districts from North Arcot to Tinnevelly, and in the southern extremity of the native state of Travancore. In the Telugu country the Mālas and Mādigas and in the Canarese country the Holeyas take their place.[79]

The lowliest communal work was performed by the Paraiyans:

. . .Three communal servants, the grave-digger (Vettiyān), watchman (Talailyāri), and scavenger (Toti) are all Paraiyans.[80]

The two authors have the following to say about the Holeyas:

. . .The bulk of the Holeyas are in the Madras Presidency, found in South Canara, but there are a considerable number of them in Coimbatore and on the Nilgiris (working on Chinchona, tea and coffee estates). In the manual of the South Canara district it is noted that Holeyas are the field labourers, the former agrestic serfs of South Canara, Pulayan being the Malayalam and Paraiyan the Tamil form of the same word. The name is derived by Brahmins from hole, pollution, and by others from hola, land or soil, in recognition of the fact that, as in the case of the Paraiyan, there are customs remaining which seem to indicate that the Holeyas were once masters of the land. . . .[81]

According to the Kēralōpatti these agrestic slave castes were formerly hill tribes.[82] In Kerala there were in all twenty slave castes.[83]

It may be thought that the Śūdra slavery of the Brahminic society might have been more rigorous and ruthless because of its patriarchal nature, while the Dāsa slavery of the non-Brahminic society, e.g., ranging from Indus to Kerala, might have been less rigorous and ruthless because of the matrilineal nature of this society. Let us examine their points of similarities and divergences.

Both were communal and predominantly 'Jenmam' (born). If the Śūdra slave could be 'killed at will' according to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII.29), the masters in Kerala wielded the same powers of life and death over their slaves:

. . .By the ancient law of Malabar, a master was accountable to no person for the life of his own slave, but was the legal judge of his offence and might punish it by death. He had, however, to obtain the sanction of his feudal chief or, more generally, of the sovereign, before executing the sentence. He could inflict corporal punishment upon the slaves. . . .[84]

From the story of Makkhali Gosāla, the leader of the Ājivika sect, and a contemporary of Buddha, we can surmise that slaves were dressed in the poorest and scantiest manner possible. Basham quotes Buddhaghosa as follows:

'. . .Gosāla was a slave who, walking over a patch of muddy ground carrying a pot of oil, was hailed by his master with the words – 'don't stumble, old fellow!' (tāta mā khal'iti). Despite the warning he carelessly tripped and spilt the oil. Fearing his master's anger he made off, but his master pursued and overtook, catching him by the edge of his robe (dāsa-kaṇṇa). Leaving his garment behind him Gosāla escaped in a state of utter nudity. . . .[85]

The present author has seen old peasant patriarchs of well-to-do houses who have never worn anything in their lives except a dhoti, always tucked up to the knees, practically amounting to a loin-cloth. Hence, the dāsa-cela or dāsa-kaṇṇa could have been no bigger than a loin-cloth. A Śūdra was permitted to wear only the worn-out and cast-off clothes and leavings of food of his masters.[86] To quote Manu (X.125):

125. The remnants of their food must be given to him as well as their old clothes, the refuse of their grain and their old household furniture.[87]

'Paricchadaḥ' is incorrectly rendered as 'household furniture'; a learned western scholar, with all his sympathy for the colonials, could never imagine the utter depth of poverty in slavery, ancient or modern. Paricchada also means utensils. But those used to be exclusively earthen pots. A few generations back, common people in Maharashtra kneaded and baked their bread and cooked their vegetables in earthen pots. Hence, even old household furniture was undreamt of luxury for a slave.

The account of the clothing of the slaves in Kerala is as follows:

. . .Mr. Baber points out: 'First with respect to clothing; the allowance consists of a waist cloth called mundu to men, and muri, signifying a fragment, to females; it is just large enough to wind round their loins, and is of the value of from one to two fanams,* equal to from 6d. to 1sh. In some

*A fanam was equal to 4 annas 8 pies and a pagoda was equal to Rs.3½ in A.D. 1909.

districts, this is given but once a year, but more generally twice, or at the festival of Ōṇam and Viṣhu which fall in September and May. On the occasion of marriages, deaths, boring of ears, first sign of puberty in girls, as also on ceremonial observances, presents are made by their masters, of money from 3 to 4 fanams, of cloth called potava, or coverings for the bride, or corpse, of the value of 2 to 3 fanams, as also articles such as oil, pepper, nellu (paddy), salt and tobacco. . .[88]

Some of the slave castes of Kerala wore loin coverings made of leaves!

Grammarian Patañjali, who flourished in the period when slavery had become confined to household work, remarked (on Pāṇini III.1.26) that slaves and servants worked only with the desire to secure food (bhaktam) and clothes. Though bhakta (Pali bhatta) came to mean food in general,* as the first 'food' was raised in Indus river valley, bhakta originally meant rice. It was the rice yield that was divided by the clan or phratry or tribal mothers; hence, the word denoting share was 'bhāga', derived from the same root bhaj, from which bhakta is derived. It was because she distributed rice bhāgas, that she was addressed as Bhagvatī. That is why earth mother is called Bhagavatī and the Vedic deity of share and prosperity also is Bhaga or Bhāga. As communal slavery originated in temple slavery, the slave who received his ration of rice for working on the Kaṭa land came to be called bhṛtaka or bhataka, which term later came exclusively to be applied to wage labourers. The food received by the slaves in ancient India is described excellently by Chanana:

. . .Ordinarily the *dāsa-kammakaras* received porridge of broken rice with sour gruel, known as *kanaajakam bilangu-dutiyakam*. In the commentary on the *Dighanikaya*, these two terms are explained as *sakandakam uttandula bhattam* and *kanjika-dutiyam*. Elsewhere it is said that ordinarily householders serve this food to their slaves and other serving folk, but in that particular household even they used to receive a dish of perfumed rice cooked with meat. It goes without saying that food left over from the meals of the masters used to be served to the domestic slaves and servants. This idea is discernible in the *Mahabharata*, where Damayanti, obliged to work as maid, stipulates that she will not accept the remains of the master's food. The same was the experience of Draupadi, who had to seek a job in the palace of Virata. Something very near the type of cheap food mentioned above is obviously meant where a greedy and a miserly setthi is said to have lived by taking a meal of husk powder cake with some rice gruel. In another story we learn that this *kanaajaka-bhatta* comes third in hierarchy where the first two places are occupied by *ranno pakkabhattam ca annam ca* (well-cooked rice

*Prisoner's ration in India is still called bhattā.

and other food for the king) and *missaka-bhattam* (mixed food) respectively. This rice-husk seems to have been much in use in so far as the poorer people were concerned, as in another context, we learn about a poor wage-earner who, desirous of offering food to the Buddha, could obtain nothing better than a 'cake' of red powder of smooth rice-husk, wetted in water and baked in hot ashes. In a later text, we are told that *kumuda-bhandikaa*, explained as a kind of corn (PED), served as food for slaves and servants. This food is to be contrasted with 'fish, meat, wine, cooked rice, other eatables' which people of rich families used to eat.

Obviously this nourishment was no good and it is only natural that the *dasa-kammakaras* were prompted to undertake a difficult job if fed on a meal of good rice. They could have such good food also when there was some rejoicing in the house or when their masters went out on a picnic. There they could also partake of wine and cooked rice (suraabhattam), normally *a-mulakam*, 'priceless' (i.e., beyond the reach of their pockets) for them. . . . In general, a note of contempt is shown towards this food, by the use of the phrase *dasa-paribhoga*, denoting slaves' fare. The best summing up, we think of a diet available to the various groups of people is given by Vidura who says that the rich have plenty of meat, the middle ones have plenty of milk products and the poor have oil (or salt) as the best thing in their food.[89]

We get detailed accounts of the fare of slaves in Kerala:

. . .Captain Burton says that 'the proprietors were bound to feed their slaves throughout the year; their allowance on work-days being double the proportion used at other times; but it was never less than two lbs. of rice to a male and about three quarters of that quantity to a female'. . . . Mr. Baber observes that 'when not regularly employed, the vallic (wages) is seldom more than half of what it is in working season, and very often even that scanty allowance is withheld, which obliges the slave to seek work from strangers.'[90]

Commissioner Graeme reported in 1822:

. . .it (wages?) varied from one and a half to one and three quarters seers of paddy (rice in the husk) to the male and from one to one and a quarter to the female slave. . . .[91]

Baber gives a revealing comparison of the fares and working conditions of slaves and wage labourers:

. . .it was within his knowledge that these (young or aged) were generally allowed half what able-bodied men and women received, provided they did some work. The wages above mentioned (by Graeme) were a third less than what was generally given to free-men field labourers who work only till noon, whereas the slave had to toil from morn until evening, with no other sustenance than his morning connee (rice water) and evening meal, after which he had to keep watch by turns at night in sheds erected on an open platform in the centre of the field, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, to scare away trespassing cattle.[92]

The slaves had to satisfy their personal needs such as tobacco and even salt out of these so-called wages:

In 1854, just one year before the abolition of slavery in Travancore, the Church Mission records supplied the following information. . . . 'What are your wages?' 'Three-quarters of an Eḍangaḷi (measure) of paddy for adults over fifteen years of age, men and women alike.' 'What are the wages in other districts?' 'Half an Eḍangaḷi with a trifling present once a year at Ōṇam.' 'How do you get salt?' 'We exchange one-sixth of our wages in paddy for a day's supply of salt.' 'And for tobacco?' 'We give the same quantity for tobacco."[93]

Household servants in Bombay, hailing from the lowly agricultural castes of the Konkan coastal strip, are still known as Rāmā gaḍis, meaning servants called by the general epithet 'Rāmā', and the other term used is Bālu. Male and female slaves in ancient India rarely had proper names, and if at all they were fortunate enough to have any, they could be drawn only from a set stock of despised names, differing of course from region to region. The law-giver Manu enjoins that the first part of a Śūdra's name should be something contemptible and the name ending should express his servile status (II.31-32):

31. Let (the first part of) a Brāhmaṇa's name (denote something) auspicious, a Kshatriya's be connected with power, and a Vaiśya's with wealth, but a Śūdra's (express something) contemptible.

32. (The second part of) a Brāhmaṇa's (name) shall be (a word) implying happiness, of a Kshatriya's (a word) implying protection, of a Vaiśya's (a term) expressive of thriving, and of a Śūdra's (an expression) denoting service.[94]

Commentators explain that the name-ending of a Brahmin should be – śarman or -deva, of a Kṣatriya -varman or -trāta, of a Vaiśya -bhūti or -datta, and of a Śūdra -dāsa or -gupta. It is an irony of history that as it pushes the slave class to less servile status, the master class vents its rage against this change lying beyond its control by hardening its subjective attitude. Manu is no exception. 'Slaves', it seems, could choose from a 'wide' range of names. The name Manthara, the jñāti-dāsi of queen Kaikeyī, means stupid or dull. Śambūka, the Śūdra martyr at the hands of Rāma, was named after a despicable vermin, snail.[95] Vidura, the finest character of Mahabharata, was raised by sage Vyāsa on a female slave of Ambikā, the elder widow of Vicitravīrya of the Kurus. The epic says that he was born of a Śūdra woman (I.107.18). Vidura means wise; he was 'uncle' to the Pāṇḍavas and one of their most sagacious and selfless protagonists

through thick and thin. But, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, Yudhiṣṭhira, celebrated for his loyalty to truth and justice, repeatedly refers to him by the epithet Kṣattā (III.5.7, 6), the highest office that an enlightened slave could occupy.

Paśu-sakha, the Śūdra communal slave of the seven sages – Kaśyapa, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Viśvāmitra, and Jamadagni, defined his name to the demoness Yātu-dhāni thus (XIII.93.100):

I please the cattle and always befriend the cattle. Hence, know me as Paśu-sakha from these qualities, O sprung of fire!

His wife Gaṇḍā was the communal Dāsi of the seven sages, and her name is one of the epithets of the mother goddess Durgā.

Chanana gives an exhaustive list of the names of slaves occurring in Buddhist scriptures:

The slaves are generally called only *dasa* or *dasi* and it is very rare to come across one with a proper name. The names gathered by us, therefore, are not many. Hereunder are given some of the names of man-slaves:

Bijaka (J.Vi.235)
Channa (Tha.68)
Daasaka (Thg.17)
Jaali (j.VI.546) – a prince given into slavery by his father.
Makkhali Gosaala (Ajivika sect leader) (D.I.47.D-g.I.143-4)
Nanda (j.III.412)
Punna (ka) (vin.1.240.Bur. III.130, Mip.IV-VIII.25)
Kaaka (Vin.1.296)
Kalanduka (J.i.458)
Kanha (D.III.16)
Katahaka (j.i.451)
Purana Kassapa (a heretic monk) (D.I.47.D-a.I.142)
Vidura (j,VI.253)
Vidudabha (j.iv.145) (became king)

It may be noted that some freemen also had similar names. Nanda, for example, was the name of a cousin of the Buddha himself. On the other hand, the practice of adding the word dasa to a proper name to show humility, is attested by the name of a free man Giridasa (Thg-a.72). . . .

In a *Vinaya*-passage (IV.8.Hor.II.274) the monks have been prohibited from abusing anyone by using any of the five names given below. The commentary explains that these names being the names of slaves, are bad ones. They are: Avakannaka, Javakannaka, Dhanitthaka, Savitthaka, and Kulavaddhaka.

We give hereunder a list of proper names of woman-slaves:

Birani (j.V.117)
Disaa (D.III.16)
Dhanapaali (j.i.402)
Naagamundaa (j.III.145)
Pingalaa (j.III.101)
Punnaa (j.i.68, II.428. Mip.IV.37)

Kali (Dh-a.I.170)
Kanhaajinaa- a princess given into slavery by her father.
Vessantara (j.VI.546)
Khujuttaraa (Bur.i.281)
Musikaa (j.III.216)
Rohini (j.i.248)
Punnikaa (Thig-a. 65)
Rajjumaalaa (Vv-a.50)
Vaasabhakhattiyaa (j.III.145)
Uttamas Ti Modaki (Thig-a. 30)

As in the case with the names of men-slaves, many free women also had similar names. For example, Rohini was the name of the cousin-sister of the Buddha himself. Again as in the case of men, the use of the word *dasi* at the end of the woman's name denotes humility.[96]

According to Patañjali (on Pāṇini, VII.3.45) Tārakā is the name of a heavenly body, while Tārikā is that of a female slave.

The belief that if a child, whose mother gives birth to short-lived children, is named after a despised caste, person or thing, no more remains a 'beloved of the gods', and becomes long-lived, is still widespread in India. The ritual of ridding a person of the injurious glance (dṛṣṭa) of an identified or unidentified person is practised by even educated Indians and it is but a part of the same belief. Many persons, even of higher castes, are named after the Bhil aboriginal tribe, e.g., Bhilā (male), Bhilī (female); similarly they are also named after the Mahāra scheduled caste and the camāra (cobbler) scheduled caste. It is said about such a person that as soon as he was born, he was seated on the lap of a woman of scheduled caste or tribe and fed on her breast and thus given a slip to death. The ritual originally was of changing the mother herself, though temporarily. It was the magic of miming death and rebirth, death as a short-lived person and rebirth as a long-lived person. According to Ācārāṅga sūtra, Mahāvīra was assured long life by his parents by resorting to the same magical ritual.[97]

Brahmins living in the territory of oligarchic saṅgha-gaṇas, being non members of the Kṣatriya tribes, were considered inferior to them by the Kṣatriyas and hence despised. Unless this peculiar tribal mentality is properly understood, it is not possible to understand the sociological cause leading to communal slavery. The first oligarchy we come across in pre-Buddha times is that of the celebrated Yādavas. Mahābhārata, in its present form, has tried its best to show it as a Brahminical society. The efforts of the ideologues of the four-caste Brahminical society to present the whole history of India as a part and parcel of the Brahminical culture is ably demonstrated by Kosambi:

> The cultural importance and normal misinterpretation of the *Mahābhārata* make a brief recapitulation essential. The earliest stories in the epic have three distinct sources. Puru-Kuru war ballads, aboriginal myths, and Yadu sagas. These discordent tales had somehow to be fitted together to suit the combined but still primitive society. The melting pot was the Delhi-Meerut-Mathurā area, at a time when metals, especially iron, were known but in short supply. Later Vedic Aryans, Naga food-gatherers of the forested divide, and Krishna's non-Vedic cattle-herders could together form a more efficient food producing society if only they stopped fighting each other. The environment and shortage of metals made it impossible for any one of the three to subdue the others by naked force. So the myths had to coalece. Recombination of the human elements was helped by the Kaśyapas, the editing of legends was done by another brahmin clan, the Bhrigus. The mutual acculturation was so effective that the *Mahābhārata* continued to be inflated and the *purānas* rewritten on the same model throughout the medieval period. The process failed only when grouping people together on the basis of joint superstition could no longer help to create a more productive society. . . .[98]

Nevertheless, in spite of these repeated re-editings, the original defies total suppression. The incident that is supposed to have led to the total destruction of the Yādavas is a case in point (XVI.2.13-22). Once on a time, thirty-six years after the Bharata war, the sages Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada went on a visit to the Yādavas. The Yādava oligarchs dressed Kṛṣṇa's son Sāmba as a woman and presenting him to the sages as the pregnant wife of Babhru, asked them that Babhru being childless, he was anxious to know whether the embryo was that of a boy or a girl. The enraged sages cursed that Sāmba would deliver an iron pestle the very next day. This is a clear case of anti-Brahminic bias of the oligarchic Yādavas.

An episode in Buddha's life confirms this conjecture. Buddha came from the Śākya oligarchy. A haughty Brahmin youth called Ambaṭṭha told Buddha:

> O Gotama, once on a time I went to Kapila-vastu on a certain errand of my preceptor, the Brahmin Pokkarasāti. When I entered the mote hall of the Sakyas, I saw many Sakya elders and Sakya youths sitting on high seats, poking fingers at each other, laughing and playing, as if they were laughing at me. Nobody invited me to take a seat. Hence, O Gotama, (I assert that) the Sakyas are uncivilised, for they do not pay respect to the venerable Brahmins.[99]

He further went on to say that Brahmins were the highest among the four castes and the rest of the three castes of Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas, and Śūdras were but the servants of the Brahmins.[100]

Buddha told him in answer that the Karṣṇyāyaṇas, the gotra to which Ambaṭṭha belonged, were originally the slaves of the Śākyas,

and declared in a gāthā that wheresoever people followed the gotra system, Khattiyas (of the oligarchies) were the highest among gods and men.[101]

The conflict is summed up by Walter Ruben as follows:

> Since C. Lassen in 1847 analysed the account of the fight between Paraśurāma and Arjuna Kārttavīrya and between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, when the mythological kings took cows by force from Brahmins, and since R. Garbe in 1903 stressed the importance of Kṣatriyas like Buddha and Kṛṣṇa for the history of Indian religion, as Kṣatriyas whose wisdom surpassed, according to Garbe, that of the Brahmins of their time and environment, the significance of this struggle of the two highest *varṇas* is little by little, becoming clearer. Kṛṣṇa belonged to the *Saṁgha* of the Vṛṣṇis; Buddha to the Śākyas. Among the Śākyas, in contrast to the kingdoms, the Brahmins were not recognised as the first *varṇa*. This is made abundantly clear in the famous third *sutta* of the Dighanikāya which describes the position of the proud Brahmin, Ambaṭṭha, who was despised by the Śākya Kṣatriyas. Among the Vṛṣṇis, the Brahmins played no role in the biography of Kṛṣṇa. His heroic deeds were meant to protect his people, especially the herdsmen in the forests around Mathurā against demons, quite in contrast to the deeds of Rāma who protected Brahminical ascetics against demons in the South Indian forests and the adventures of Yudhiṣṭhira who migrated from Brahmin to Brahmin during his long tour through the forests of Northern India. The only Brahmin of any importance in Kṛṣṇa's life was his teacher Sandīpani, who lived in Benaras and not among the Vṛṣṇi *Saṁgha*. Similarly, Mahāvira, the founder of Jainism, was a Kṣatriya of the Licchavi *Saṁgha* and not a Brahmin. Thus three famous reformers and founders of anti-orthodox, anti-vedic and in this sense anti-Brahminical religions were Kṣatriyas, originating from *Saṁghas*.[102]

The demarcation is not so simple as Ruben makes it out to be, namely that of the monarchist Brahmins versus the republican Kṣatriyas. It has been clearly demonstrated that the institution of Brahman is of pre-Aryan origin and that the Videhas and the Vaiśālas, constituent tribes of the Vajji oligarchy or republic, were in the period of Rāmāyaṇa theocratic monarchical states. Unless this is clearly realised, the Rubenian conception of the national conflict of ancient India is bound to deteriorate into the exclusively communal or casteist conception of Brahmins versus Kṣatriyas or non-Brahmins, hiding the real conflict of antagonistic classes that fought out their battles behind this caste facade. The point that we want to drive home at this juncture is that in the period under consideration, apart from the economic causes already delineated, the ethnical inimicability of a tribe against another, expressed in the Ṛg-vedic terms mitra (one's co-tribesman) and amitra (alien tribesman), standing for friend and foe

respectively, played one of the most basic roles in ushering communal slavery.

The point from which we had gone at a tangent was that the slaves in ancient India were either known as just slaves, having no proper names, and if at all they were known, their names were drawn upon from a definite stock of names reserved only for slaves, the stock varying, of course, from region to region. The most important name that demands our closer attention is Puṇṇaka (male) and puṇṇikā (female), the Sanskrit equivalents for them being Pūrṇaka and Pūrṇikā respectively. Even the divine Yakṣa Puṇṇaka was conscious of its inborn servile connotation. When he rode into the mote hall of the Kurus and challenged king Dhanañjaya of the Kurus to a game of dice, the king asked him:

> In which rāṣṭra (meaning country and tribal land both) is your Jati-bhumi (meaning birth-place and phratry-land both)? Your speech is not that of a Kauravya. You are dazzling everybody here with your effulgence. Speak what is your name and who are your kinsmen.[103]

He thought to himself – 'This king is asking my name. Puṇṇaka is the name of a slave. If I tell him in reply that my name is Puṇṇaka, he will think that it is only a cultured slave that he is speaking to. I shall tell him my name of former birth.'[104] Aloud he said:

> O king, I am a Brahmin youth called Kātyāyana. I am called by the name Anyūna (positive synonym of Pūrṇaka). In the Aṅga (country) are my phratrymen and clansmen. Your majesty, I have come here to play a game of dice with you.[105]

Why should the Yakṣa or Gandharva Puṇṇaka have the name of a slave? Because the Yakṣas or Gandharvas, headed by Vaiśravaṇa Kubera, themselves were the communal slaves of the gods headed by Śakra Indra.[106] Kubera was the maternal uncle of Puṇṇaka and Puṇṇaka was the general (senā-pati) and most probably the heir-apparent of Kubera.[107] The communal slaves of the gods were also matrilineal.

Why the name Puṇṇaka? Pūraṇa Kassapa was a contemporary of Buddha and he was a ford-maker (tīrthaṅkara) of a sect of monks. He propounded the philosophy of inaction (a-kriyā-vāda) or non-causality (a-hetu-vāda).[108] Pūraṇa is a synonym of Puṇṇaka:

> . . .According to Buddhaghosa, Pūraṇa Kassapa was a runaway slave. It was to his slavery that he owed the name Pūraṇa; he completed (pūraṇa) the century of slaves in the household that owned him. Later he ran away from his masters and went about naked because his clothes were stolen by thieves. . . .[109]

Thus, Puṇṇaka or Puṇṇikā (female) were the heads of a century of male or female slaves. The number 100 is not just conventional and imaginery as Chanana thinks.[110] If a matrilineal clan of Kerala increased to hundred or more than hundred, it split up and a new clan was formed.[111] Puṇṇaka and Puṇṇikā were the clan leaders of the tribe of communal slaves.

The puṇṇakas and kattās were not the villicuses, the slave-gang heads of the chattel slaves working on the individually owned latifundia estates of the Greeks and Romans. The temple-land slaves were a tribe enslaved. They lived in their non-working hours as a tribe, and worked on the temple land under their respective tribal heads. But their working organisation could not be a replica of their tribal pattern, for it had to be subservient to the ownership pattern of the kata-raṣṭra land. We have already seen that the rāṣṭra tribal land was periodically divided first into phratry shares and then each phratry allotted its clan shares, and that the most important kinship and membership unit in a matriarchal agricultural society was not a clan, but a phratry. That is why in the whole of the Buddhist canonical literature, we come across a single mention of a saṅgha-dāsī, female slave of a tribe. Vessantara Jātaka (547) informs us that Visākhā, one of the most distinguished of Buddhist nuns, was called Saṅgha-dāsī in her former birth.[112]

We come across the first mention of the term denoting a phratry-slave, namely jñāti-dāsi, in Rāmāyaṇa (II.7.1). Manthara was the jñāti-dāsī of Kaikeyī:

> . . Describing Mantharaa, the poet says, 'the *jnati-dasi* of Kaikeyi, who had come with her (as part of latter's dowry) and who was her maid-servant.' It shows that Mantharaa was one of the women-slaves given to Kaikeyi as part of her dowry. If this is a characteristic common to all the slaves of this type, then one can say that probably the *nati-dasi* of the Tipitaka was also a woman-slave given in dowry who accompanied the daughter of her master to her husband's house. If we believe the account given in the commentary on the *Itivuttaka*, then the famous nun Khujuttaraa had also been a *jnati-dasi*, as she had been born in the house of the Setthi Ghosita of a wet-nurse (presumably with the Setthi as her father) and had been given as a maid when that Setthi gave his adopted daughter Saamaavati in marriage, to the king Udena.[113]

Kaikeyī means a daughter of the Kaikeyas. The present districts of Jhelum, Shahpur, and Gujaral of the Punjab constituted the Kekaya jana-pada[114] and it fell into the matrilineal region of the epic period. A

daughter of such a people could only be brought away as a wife by transgressing the prevailing custom of matrilochal marriage. It could be done either by forcible abduction (Rākṣasa form of marriage) or by purchase (rājya-śulka). As already noted, Bhiṣma brought away Kālī of the Dāśas in accordance with the rājya-śulka custom, while he forcibly abducted Ambā, Ambikā, and Ambālikā of the Kosalas according to the Rākṣasa custom. But the Rākṣasa form of marriage involved much bloodshed and hence was of rare occurrence. The tribal people in that part of the country where the present author lives, still practise Rākṣasa form of marriage; but after the abduction, the bride's kinsmen go to the bridegroom's village for 'jhagaḍā' as it is called, meaning for settling the quarrel, bride-price is agreed upon and given by the bridegroom's kinsmen, and the 'jhagaḍā' ends in a communal dinner. Briffault has correctly explained it by citing numerous examples.[115]

In the Ārṣa form of marriage recommended for Brahmins by the Smṛtis, a cow and a bull had to be given by the bridegroom as bride-price to his father-in-law.[116] All the agriculturist castes in Maharashtra observed the custom of bride-price. Spread of education and development of capitalist farming have reversed it in favour of the bridegroom and the new custom of paying dowry to the bridegroom is taking hold of one caste after another. The tribals in Maharashtra still observe the custom of 'ghara-jāvaī', (i.e., son-in-law living in the house of his father-in-law), by which a son-in-law who could not afford to pay the bride-price lives in his father-in-law's house after marriage for five years and works in lieu of bride-price. Hence, it is incorrect to say that Manthara came with Kaikeyī as part of her dowry. Kaikeyi herself could be obtained in marriage by king Daśaratha of the Kosalas only after agreeing to the condition of rājya-śulka (II.108.2-3).

Rājya-śulka itself denotes that it was a modification of the matrilochal marriage. Kaikeyī could be married by Daśaratha on condition that her son would succeed to the rule of the Kosalas and not the issue of Kausalyā, the chief queen. In seeming to preserve the right of one woman, this form of marriage overthrows the right of woman-kind.

Chanana has not been able to give a satisfactory explanation of jñāti-dāsi. It is due to his unqualified acceptance of the definition of jñāti as 'relations on the father's side'.[117] This is the definition of a phratry belonging to patriarchal society in which this institution

(phratry) no more plays any economic role and remains merely the name of an exogamous kinship group, subservient to its clans, which have now become the most important units of the patriarchal tribe. Even the non-Brahminical Jaina scriptures have no better definition to offer. Samayasundara, commenting on Kalpa-sūtra, defined jāti as kinsmen on mother's side and kula as kinsmen on father's side. The Vajji oligarchy from which Mahāvīra hailed had already become fully patriarchal, and hence the differentiation of kula from jñāti or jāti.

In a patriarchal society jñāti becomes an exogamous kinship group, i.e., its female members have to leave their jñāti and go to live in their respective husband's jñātis, while the male members of the jñāti bring wives from other jñātis. The reverse is the state of affairs in a matriarchal jñāti, i.e., its male members leave their jñāti and go, temporarily or permanently, to their respective wive's jñāti, while the female members of the jñāti consort, temporarily or permanently, with husbands of another jñāti.

There is an intervening stage between the two, which can be called the transitional stage, coming when a matriarchal society is passing over to the patriarchal stage. In this transitional stage a jñāti is constituted of exogamous but inter-marrying clans, i.e., the jñāti becomes endogamous. The Śākyas were in this stage, and that is why the Buddhist scriptures define jñāti as relation on both mother's and father's sides, reaching back to the seventh degree.[118] Passing through this stage matriarchal jñāti turns into its opposite, patriarchal jñāti.

No such jñāti-dāsī was given by king Janaka of the Videhas to Sītā and her cousin sisters, though numerous male and female slaves formed their retinues when they started for their respective husband's houses in Ayodhyā (I.75.5). It means that the Videhas had advanced into patriarchy comparatively much further.

The Śūdra Pāśu-sakha and his Dāsī-wife Gaṇḍā, already referred to, were the slaves of the seven sages and Arundhatī or Caṇḍālī Akṣamālā, the so-called individual wife of Vasiṣṭha. These seven sages were the progenitors of the Brahminical gotras and hence they formed a phratry, rendering Paśu-sakha and Gaṇḍā their phratry-slaves.

The clans of the Virāṭas and the Kīcakas (=bamboo) of the Matsya (=fish) tribe formed a phratry of the transitional stage. The Pāṇḍavas along with Draupadī had become self-declared slaves of this phratry in the last year of their period of banishment (V.160.89; V.161.8).

The Buddhist canon Vinaya-piṭaka[119] says that a phratry of traders (seṭṭhis) called Kalanda had founded a suburb of Vaiśālī called

Kalanda-gāma. Sudinna, the young and the only son of a rich trader of that phratry, happened to hear the discourse of Buddha in Vaiśālī, and became a Buddhist monk, overcoming the opposition of his parents and phratry members. After a lapse of time, he came to Kalanda-gāma and approaching his father's house saw his ñāti-dāsī on the point of throwing away the rotten gruel of beans. Dissuading her from the act, he took it in his begging bowl and sitting near by, started eating it. She recognised him and told her mistress that her master Sudinna had come. The rest of the story does not concern us. Traders were the first to develop joint family. Here we have a joint family and phratry of the trader class and a ñāti-dāsī of the Kalandas serving in the house of Sudinna's father. The second case is furnished by Majjhima-nikāya.[120] Thulla-koṭṭhita was the capital city of the land of the Kurus. Here lived one of the eight agga-kulikas* of the king of the Kurus. Young Ratthapala also turned a monk in the same manner and as in the case of Sudinna, came to visit his home twelve years after his renunciation. He accosted his ñāti-dāsī in the same act of throwing away the rotten gruel of beans and taking it from her started eating it and was similarly recognised by her. The difference between the two stories is that Sudinna belonged to a joint family, while Raṭṭapāla belonged to a clan. The text mentions the friends and elders, phratry and clan brothers (mitta-amaccā, ñāti-sālohitā) of Raṭṭhapāla in contradistinction to only the ñātis of Sudinna. It means that non trading dvija castes in a theocratic monarchy like the Koravya had not as yet developed joint family system and lived in clan system. The question arises, how could a phratry-slave serve only the kula-putta Raṭṭhapala's clan? Bṛhaspati lays down the following mode of dividing slaves:

> ...A single female (slave) should be successively set to work at their houses (by the several sharers) according to their shares (of the inheritance).
>
> 83. If there are many of them, they shall be divided equally. The same rule applies to male slaves as well.

As a single female slave was to work by turns and according to their shares in the joint family houses of the sharers, the jñāti-dāsī must have been set to work by turns by the clans constituting a phratry. V.S. Agrawala gives an excellent description of the remuneration received by communal servants and slaves while

*The eight ministers of ancient Indian kings and also of the highest body (aṣṭa-kulika) of oligarchy were drawn from these agra-kulikas or the heads of the highest clans.

expounding the grammatical rules connected with them:

...We read in the Arthaśāstra of bhakta-karmakara, i.e., servants engaged on the stipulation of being given daily food. In actual rural economy there has always existed the custom of giving a portion of the mid-day meal to certain domestic servants and menials, like the scavenger and the water-carrier, etc. Their daily wage in respect of the services rendered to the various families consist only of food articles, which they are required to collect in the course of the day from the houses served by them. The village Brāhmaṇa also by virtue of his privileged position as purohita gets a portion, which is no doubt referred to in the illustration agrabhojanika (agre bhojanam asmai niyuktaṁ diyate) cited by the Kāśikā. In this case the members of the household cannot partake of their food unless the agrabhojana has been set apart. It is to be noted that this supply of food (niyukta-bhaksha) is part of the stipulated wages for which the servant is employed. According to Pāṇini, the food thus supplied might be of different kinds, viz. cooked vegetables (śrāṇa), rice cooked with meat (māṁsa and odana, IV.4.6), or full meal, (bhakta, IV.4.68). One getting cooked vegetables would be called śrāṇika, śrāṇiki in the case of a female; similarly māṁsika (getting meat as food), odanika (getting boiled rice) and bhāktika. The bhāktika was the same as bhakta-karmakara of Kauṭilya, receiving a full meal every day. This practice worked out in a manner that the servant could make a complete meal with the different articles received from different houses. The same person would be a śrāṇika in respect of one family, odanika in respect of a second. For example, a female water-carrier (udahārī) agreed to take vegetables from one house, soup from other, meat and rice from a third and so on, and thus she earned her full meal....[121]

These uda-hāris are defined by Taittiriya saṁhitā (VII.5.10) as female slaves:

...Slave girls dance round the Mārjālīya fire with water-pots on their heads, beating the ground with their feet, and singing 'This is honey'.[122]

According to Nighaṇṭu (I.12.11) madhu (honey) means water. The uda-hāris here are going through the rain-making dance.

Uda-hāris were the same as kumbha-dāsīs, female slaves of the water-pitcher. In the Mahānārada-Kassapa Jātaka (545), Bījaka (of the communal seed), the communal slave of the Videhas, says that being born of a kumbhadāsī he has been condemned to this hellish existence.[123]

Kumbha-dāsī was of the 'jenmaṃ' (born in the house of the master) category. Kaṇhājinā appealed to her father Vessantara, the banished prince of the Śibis, who had given her over in slavery along with her brother Jāli to the Brahmin Pūjaka:

Kaṇhajinā told him, 'O father, this Brahmin is cudgelling me as if I am a

dāsī born in (his) house'.[124]

Bandhakī of Mahābhārata (II.68.35) and Vinayapiṭaka[125] also seems to have been a phratry-slave; for Karṇa defines her status as follows – '...bandhakī is under the control of several persons and she can be treated as her masters like....'[126]

Rāmā of the Dharma-śāstras falls under the same category:

One should not approach (for copulation) a raamaa woman after having prepared the sacred fire (because) the raamaa woman, of the black skin, is intended for pleasure and not for the fulfilment of religious duty.[127]

In feudal times kumbha-dāsī was further degraded to the position of the lowliest of professional prostitutes.[128]

An illustration of a person made phratry-slave through judicial punishment is provided by Kulāvaka Jātaka (31). In Macala village of the Magadha country lived thirty clans. Magha, who was born in the highest clan of the village, persuaded all the clansmen to live a virtuous life, thereby depriving the headman of the village (gāma-bhojaka) of his income of bribes and fines (cāṭi and daṇḍa-bali). The headman got Magha and the rest of the clan elders arrested as thieves and all but succeeded in getting them trampled under the feet of an elephant on the orders of the king. When the king knew the truth, he released them and ordered that the headman be made the slave of that phratry of thirty clans.[129]

The earliest available definition of Dāsa slavery is given by Mahābhārata. Though the extant recension is of the post-Christian era, the actual war is believed to have been fought in about B.C. 850.[130] King Yayāti, a progenitor of the Bhāratas, is spoken to by Śarmiṣṭhā, the daughter of the Asura king Vṛṣa-parvan, who had been enslaved by Devayānī, the queen of Yayāti, as follows (I.82.22-23):

(These) three are not entitled to wealth – wife, Dāsa and son. Whatever wealth they have, goes to him who owns them.
I am Devayānī's slave, while the daughter of the Bhṛgus is your slave. Both of us (Devayānī and myself) are enjoyable by you. Hence enjoy me!

Vidura, a Śūdra slave himself, gives the same definition (V.33.64). Though the definition given by Karṇa (who, being a Sūta or charioteer, comprised the Vaiśya caste of the Aryan tribes) is not different from the former two, it is interesting for its details (II.71.1-4):

These three – Dāsa, son and woman, remain without wealth and devoid of freedom, O auspicious one, up to that time their master, father and husband

respectively are alive. The wife or wealth belonging to a man goes to him to whom he loses his freedom.

The best course for you is to enter the retinue of the king. Your masters, O daughter of a king, are not the sons of Pṛthā, but the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Choose another husband without loss of time, so that, O auspicious one, you may not be condemned to slavery through dicing. But bear this in mind that women having husbands are not free to behave as they like, while they are unrestricted in slavery!

The definition of a slave given by the Buddhist scriptures is excellently summed up by Chanana:

According to *Digh Nikaya*, a *dasa* is not master of himself, depends on another and cannot go where he likes. (That is, he is not free to act according to his pleasure and has to act according to the will of his master. In fact, he has to depend for his very life on the sweet will of his master.) In another context, we are told that the master has full powers over his slave, can beat him and even kill him, if he so chooses. The sense is made clearer by the definition of the word, bhujissa, antonym of the word, dasa. A bhujissa 'is independent, has no one for his master and acts as it pleases him'. To this definition, Buddhaghosa adds *'attano santako'*, master of himself. Commenting on the phrase, *Yathaa dasa bhujissam patthenti*, 'as the slaves prefer (desire) to be *bhujissas*', he remarks: 'As the *bhujissas*, the free men, do what they like, as no one can forcibly prevent them from doing so, the slaves desire the state of free men'. By purchasing one's liberty, a slave can do what pleases him. The state of slavery, it may be added, is known as *dasavya, dasabya, dasataa* or *dasattha*. Another term is *dasabhoga*.

The absence of all rights is the chief criterion of slavery. This is underlined in the text where the authors describe the duty of the slave to obey his master, to work even on the day of festival if his master so demands. From the legal point of view, the slave is not a human being, but an object. Everything possessed by him, whether it be small or big, is the property of the person who owns him, as the slave neither possesses his own self, nor any goods; these latter belong to his master. In fact, a commentator includes the *dasas* among movable goods like the livestock.[131]

The earliest definition of Śūdra is given by Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII-29):

. . .If water (they bring), it is the food of the Śūdras, with this food thou wilt strengthen the Śūdras; in thine offspring one like a Śūdra will be born, the servant (preṣyaḥ) of another, to be removed at will, to be slain at will. When evil happens to a Kṣatriya, there is born in his offspring one like a Śūdra. . . .[132]

The term preṣya is incorrectly translated by Keith as servant, for it means a slave. Comparing these definitions of Dāsa and Śūdra and collating them with the preceding discussion, it becomes evident that both of them pertain to patriarchal slavery. Draupadī did not question the right of the free husband to stake his wife, but the right of a husband who had already gambled away his freedom to stake his wife (see chapter 8). Bhīma, the haughtiest of the Pāṇḍavas, did not raise any objection to himself and his younger brothers being staked by Yudhiṣṭhira, but he was enraged by the fact that the freedom and honour of Draupadī had been gambled away (II.68.3-4). He declared that Yudhiṣṭhira was not only the master of his clan, but also the obtainer of all their meritorious acts and penances and the arbiter of their very lives.

Just as the products of land and cattle belonged to their owner, the offsprings of slaves also belonged to their patriarchal master (kulakara).* When the enslaved Draupadī was asked by Dhṛtarāṣṭra to choose boons, she said (II.71.28-28):

If you condescend to grant me a boon, O bull of the Bharatas, then I choose that the knower of all dharmas, the opulent Yudhiṣṭhira, be manumitted from slavery.

May not (other) boys speak, though in ignorance, of my high-spirited child (from Yudhiṣṭhira) Prativindhya – 'He is that son of a Dāsa!'

Kerala having been in matrilineal slavery, a survey of the state of ownership of slaves prevailing there will help us to understand the kind of ownership existing in matrilineal slavery of ancient times:

Lieutenant Conner says, in his report of the Trigonometrical survey of Travancore, 1820: 'Husband and wife sometimes serve different persons, but more frequently the same. The females of this class are given in usufruct, scarcely ever in complete possession. The eldest male child belongs to the master of the father; the rest of the family remain with the mother while young, but being the property of her owner, revert to him, when of an age to be useful, and she follows in the event of her becoming a widow.' In the Calicut district, half of the children belonged to the mother, or rather to her proprietor, and the other half to the father's master, the odd number was the property of the former. When both parents belonged to one owner, he of course, claimed all the offsprings.[133]

The account is confusing. If more than half of the slave children belonged to their slave mothers, i.e., to their masters, and the rest (less than half) belonged to their slave fathers, i.e., to their masters, then it is clear that the majority of slave husbands and wives, instead of belonging to one master and hence residing at one place, seem to have

*Sāmiko (Sanskrit svāmin), meaning master, is defined by Vinayapiṭaka (Pācittiya pāli; IV.16.69, IV.17.74) as a person who is the master in that clan.

been serving different masters and hence residing at different places. Only the marriage custom among the slaves will explain the real state of things. The slaves of Kerala were also organised into exogamous phratries. Anantha Krishna Iyer states:

> Marriage is prohibited among members of the same Koottam. . . . In the Chittur taluk, members of the same village do not intermarry, for they believe that their ancestors may have been the slaves of the same local landlord, and as such the descendants of the same parents. . . .[134]

Here the word 'parents' should be substituted by the word 'mother'; for, as already explained at legnth, descent in Kerala was exclusively through woman, and not through man. The form of marriage among the slaves was in no way different from that of their masters, the Nayars. As described by the same author:

> In the Ooragam proverthy of the Trichur taluk, I find that the marriage among the Pulayas of that locality and the neighbouring villages is a rude form of sambandham (alliance), somewhat similar to that which prevails among the Nayars, whose slaves a large majority of them are. The husband, if he may be so called, goes to the woman's hut with his wages, to stay therein with her for the night. They may serve under different masters. A somewhat similar custom prevails among the Pula Cherumas of the Trichur taluk. The connection is called Marungu Kooduka, which means to tame, or to associate with.[135]

The expenses of the marriage of a slave were defrayed by his master:

> When a young Pulayar wishes to marry, he applies to his master, who is bound to defray the expenses. He gives seven fanams to the bride's master, one fanam worth of cloth to the bride elect, and about ten fanams for the marriage feast. In all this expense amounts to ten rupees. The ceremony consists in tying a ring attached to a thread round the neck of the bride. . . .[136]

The marriage and the conjugal life following it are completely matrilochal:

> A young man who wishes to marry goes to the parents of the young woman, and asks their consent to associate with their daughter. If they approve, he goes to her at night as often as he likes. The woman seldom comes to the husband's hut to stay with him, except with the permission of the thamer (landlord) on auspicious occasions. . . .[137]

The eldest son of a slave-mother was claimed by her husband's master in order to recover Rs.10, the expenses he had incurred in the marriage of his male slave, and it was also the average price of a slave; for the price of a slave in Kerala fluctuated between Rs.6 and Rs.18.[138] The rest of the children belonged to their slave-mother, i.e., her master, according to the marumakkattāyam law!

It has already been explained that matriarchy or matrilineality entailed polyandry and communal ownership of land and that it precluded prostitution. One thing should be added to this, and it is that, descent being exclusively through females, every child that a woman had, either through her husband or husbands or otherwise, was legitimate. The sage Uddālaka, as already referred to, told his son Śvetaketu that not only his mother but all women were unrestricted in their sexual behaviour, which means in other words that all children they had, in marriage or otherwise, were legitimate. When Kunti divulged the secret that Karṇa was her first and virgin born son, Yudhiṣṭhira did not blame her for being an adulteress, but mourned that her secretive attitude had led them to kill their uterine (jñātih) eldest brother (XI.27.6-29) and then offered the libation of water to him (Karṇa). Illegitimacy of children is the product of patriarchy, and the illegitimate children produced by the masters on their slaves, go to swell the ranks of household slaves. The earliest example is that of Vidura, the illegitimate child of Vyāsa produced on Ambikā's Dāsi. The second well-known example is that of Vāsabha-khattiyā, the illegitimate daughter of the Śākya oligarch Mahānāma produced on his Dāsī Nāga-Muṇḍā.

Anu-gītā, expounding the Sāṅkhya philosophy, illustrates the three attributes of Prakṛti: sattva, rajas, and tamas, as follows (XIV.39.11):

> Śūdra is characterised by the attribute tamas, Kṣatriya by rajas and Brahmin by sattva; thus are the three castes endowed with the three attributes (of Prakṛti).

These three castes together constituted the Saṅgha (XIV.39.4):

> It is in the very nature of these three attributes to exist, with or without motive, in a confederated form, to move in a confederated form and to travel in a confederated form.

This undoubtedly is the definition of the pre-Aryan Indus slave society, for it precludes the Vaiśya caste of the four-caste society. Śūdra, the term for the fourth caste, does not fit in this three-caste system at all, and it is evident that it has displaced the original word 'Dāsa'. The incompatibility will become clear beyond doubt by the following verse of Śānti-parva (188.5):

The colour of Brahmins is fair, of Kṣatriyas red, of Vaiśyas yellow and of Śūdras dark.

The four-colour system cannot be adjusted into the three attributes of the Sāṅkhya Prakṛti by any means at all. Four attributes and their respective colours are totally alien to Sāṅkhya philosophy. Sāṅkhya philosophy itself remained alien to Brahminical philosophies as long as it was not assimilated by them.[139]

Sāṅkhya originated as tantra-agricultural magic of the pre-slavery matriarchy of Indus civilisation and was systematised into a doctrine with the rise of temple land slavery in that civilisation. The categories of matriarchy were transmuted into the categories of matrilineal slavery. But, Śūdra slavery being a phenomenon of Aryan patriarchy, Kṛṣṇa had to say in his Gītā that the four castes were created by him, a male and a patriarchal god (VI.28.13):

(These) four castes have been created by me, their classification being based on their respective inborn qualities and modes of subsistence. (But) know that I am without any kartā and (thus) immortal, (though I am the kartā of this four caste society).

The servile and evanescent kartā of the matriarchal society is here metamorphosed into the supreme and immortal god.

Though the term aspṛśya, meaning untouchable, was sent into circulation for the first time by Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra,[140] supposed to have been compiled in the period between the third century B.C. and the first century B.C., as already explained, the conception of inter-tribal inimicability and the custom of interdiction on commensality between masters and slaves and the belief in pollution from any such commensality, might have been as ancient as the tribal and matrilineal slave societies. The Śūdras themselves were divided into niravasita (untouchable) and a-niravasita (touchable) according to Pāṇini's rule II.4.10. Since a rule, grammatical or otherwise, was coined after the concerned practice had been of long standing and popular sanction, the custom might have been in vogue for at least a few centuries before the fourth century B.C. in which Pāṇini is supposed to have flourished. Patañjali defined niravasita as a person whose contact was so forbidding that the pots in which he had dined could not be purified by any means whatsoever, while the pots in which an a-niravasita had dined could be purified by saṁskāras. The grammatical rule was made to differentiate between the compounds that were to be formed of the niravasita castes and a-niravasita castes. Kane explains:

...Pāṇ.II.4.10 and Patañjali say that a Samāhāradvandva compound can be formed from several subdivisions of śūdras that are not *niravasita*, e.g., we can have the 'takṣāyaskāram' meaning carpenters and blacksmiths, but not caṇḍāla-mṛtapam, 'because caṇḍalas and mṛtapas are niravasita śudras (and so the compound will be caṇḍāla-mṛtapāḥ)....[141]

The word niravasita is formed by the negative preposition nir, and avasita, meaning dwelling. The word literally means a person who lives not in a boycotted, but in a separate dwelling. The Caṇḍalas and Mṛtapas were ordered by Manu to live as follows (x.50-56):

They should live under Caitya trees and in cemeteries, on mountains and in sacred groves, and let them be known (by their distinguishing marks) and subsist by occupations prescribed for them.

The Caṇḍālas and Śva-pacas should live outside a village. Pollution results from the mere touch of their pots. Their sole wealth should be dogs and donkeys.

They should wear garments taken from corpses (brought to cemeteries), dine in broken (earthern) pots, and thus live virtually dead to this world.

A law-abiding person need not consider any contract with them to be sacrosanct. Their transactions should be only among themselves and they should marry exclusively within their respective castes.

They should depend for their food on others (i.e., Aryans) and the food given to them should be in potsherds. They should desist from wandering at night in villages and towns.

They should go about their work in the day-time only, branded with the marks prescribed by the royal edict. It is enjoined that they should carry out corpses having no relatives.

They should always execute criminals (condemned to death) at the orders of the king and appropriate for themselves the clothes, beddings and ornaments of the executed.

The appearance of a Caṇḍāla has been graphically described by Mātaṅga Jātaka (497):

...clad in a bad under-garment of red colour round which a belt is tied; above this a dirty upper garment, an earthern pot in hand....[142]

Their living under Caitya trees or in sacred groves or cemeteries, wearing red clothes and keeping donkeys and worshipping Durgā, denote that they were descendants of the Caṇḍāli Akṣa māla, the temple-land slaves of the Indus society. The term niravasita originally meant those who dwelt in the slaves' quarters of such a society.

The nir-avasita castes were also called antyajas.[143] But this division of the Śūdra castes into 'touchables' and 'untouchables' belongs not to the varṇa or slave society proper, but to the jāti or feudal society. In jāti society Ati-Śūdras became non-varṇas, while in varṇa society the

Śūdras were a varṇa. Kuntī lived with Vidura during the whole period of banishment of her sons, i.e., thirteen years. Kṛṣṇa also put up with Vidura when he came to Hastināpura for the final negotiations with the Kauravas. Damayantī and Draupadī served as Sairandhrī Dāsīs who performed the toilet of their royal mistresses. *These examples prove that untouchability was a product of the jāti feudal society.*

Prakṛti was not only a general term used to denote the Antyaja or Nir-avasita castes, but seems also to have been a proper name among the Caṇḍālas. The story 'Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna' in 'Divyāvadāna', on which Richard Wagner based his famous work *Parsifol*, has for its hero Ānanda, the most colourful of Buddha's bhikkhus, and as heroine Prakṛti, a Caṇḍāla damsel.[144]

The compound antya-ja is dissolved to mean 'born lastly' or 'born at the rock bottom of the society'. But it seems that the word also had another connotation:

> The Vinaya enumerates three types of slaves, i.e., (i) *antojatako*, (ii) *dhanakkito*, and (iii) *Karamara-anito*. According to the commentary, one born of a slave-woman is known as *anto-jatako*, one purchased is *dhanakkito* and one brought from another country and made slave is *kara-mara-anito*. In the *Dighanikaya*, a fourth type, known as *Samam dasavvam upagato* is added. This stands for 'one who has, himself, accepted to be slave'. In the *Tipitika*, whenever one has to mention types of slaves, these four types alone are referred to. In the Niddesa, for example, these four types of slaves are referred to while enumerating various types of property. In the *Jataka* commentary, however, another type is added, namely *aamaaya daasaa ti bhavanti eke*, 'some are slaves born in the house'. Clearly this is another term for the *antojatako* referred to above. . . .[145]

'Anto' is evidently a synonym of 'amā', meaning dwelling, house, and amā in the compound amā-vāsyā (new moon night) means house or temple of the earth mother. Hence, antya-ja or antya-avasāyin or anto-jātako originally meant temple-land slaves.

The cause of the enslavement of the Suparṇī (Heaven, Dyo) tribe by the Kadrū (earth, Pṛthivī) tribe as given by Taittirīya Saṁhitā (VI.1.6.1) is – 'Kadrūś ca vai Suparṇī ca ātmarūpayor spardhetām'. It is translated by Keith as – 'Kadrū and Suparṇī had a dispute (for the stake of) each other's form' – which is too literal and makes little sense. Nirukta (II.9, V.8) gives vṛ as a synonym of rūpa. The root vṛ is used by Taittirīya Saṁhita (II.5.2; VI.4.7) for exchange of boons:

> . . .The gods said to Vāyu, 'Let us slay Some, the king'; he replied, 'let us choose a boon (varaṁ vṛṇai); let your cups be drawn with mine first'. Therefore the cups are drawn with those for Indra and Vāyu first. They slew him; . . . They could not find its distribution. Aditi said, 'let me choose a boon; then shall ye distribute through me, verily with me as deity may your Soma (draught) be set down'. . . .[146]

After being defeated and released alive by Arjuna, Citra-ratha, the king of the Gandharvas, wanted to present him with horses. Arjuna agreed to accept the present in exchange for imparting to Citraratha the knowledge of the fire-missile ('Tvatto' streṇa vṛnomy aśvān. . .' I.69.58). Indra, the king of gods, in order to save his son Arjuna from certain death at the hands of Karṇa in the impending great battle of the Bhāratas, went to him disguised as a Brahmin and demanded as a boon (Varaṁ vavre.III.310.13) his divine armour and earrings. Karṇa told him (III.210.17, 21):

> Hence, O performer of hundred sacrifices, you can take away my spendid ear-rings and armour in exchange of something and not otherwise. Give me (your) Śakti (a deadly missile), O Vāsava, in exchange of (my) armour and earrings (Varmaṇā kuṇḍalābhyāṁ śaktiṁ me dehi. . .).

The whole context of these incidents and the word 'vinimaya' used by Karṇa denote beyond doubt that it was a barter. Exchange of gifts develops into barter. Though the earliest Vedic word for barter is derived from the root krī and value is called vasna by the Rk IV.24.9, another Sanskrit term for barter: 'nimāna', is self-expressive. It is formed of the preposition ni and the root mā. Mā means to measure,[147] and it is the very root from which mā, meaning mother, is derived. The tribal mother not only measured out and apportioned the rāṣtra communal land and its product, but also measured the value of the surplus communal product that could be exchanged for the surplus communal product of another tribe. Inter-tribal barter was thus originally transacted exclusively by tribal mothers, and that is why Rk I.124.8 styles Uṣas and her co-matriarchs as 'samana-gāḥ', meaning those who go to the tribal fair. Briffault states:

> To the women as cultivators of the soil and keepers of the food store, all surplus production belongs and is theirs to dispose of. . . . In all early culture the barter and traffic is in the hands of the women. Among the tribes of Assam and of Manipur 'Women do all the trading.'[148]

Though the custom is fast dying out, the peasants of Maharashtra excepting such regions as Khandesh, used to sell their surplus products in weekly bazars through their women-folk. It has already been mentioned that while the Pāṇḍavas devoted all their time to physical exercise and practice at arms, it was Draupadī who managed

their economic and state affairs. The word nimāna is at least as old as the Mahābhārata war, i.e., B.C. 850.[149] Droṇaparva (179.53) says that Karṇa had bartered his ear-rings (and armour) for gaining the great Śakti (Śaktim śreṣṭhaṁ kuṇḍalābhyāṁ nimāya). In the actual barter transaction, nimāna means the product which its owner wants to sell, and the product which he wants to acquire in exchange is called nimeya.[150] The basic law by which barter transactions were regulated has been enunciated by Pāṇini's rule V.2.47, which is explained by Puri as follows:

> ...Commenting on the Sūtra-saṁkhyāyā guṇasya nimāne mayaṭ (V.2.47), which refers to the affixing of mayaṭ to numericals standing for the value of some part of a thing denoting another thing. Patañjali refers to the guiding principal of all barter transactions, namely, the invariable nature of the ratio. The valuation was determined on the basis of one portion of nimeya (the thing to be bought) with several portions of nimāna (the thing to be given in exchange). It is inapplicable in case of dvau yavānāṁ traya udaśvit iti, nor can the ratio apply to fractions, but to an integral number, as for example, its inapplicability in the illustration dvau bhāgau yavānām adhyartha udaśvitaḥ. The comparative value of the thing has to be taken into consideration for the application of the mayaṭ affix, like dvimayā yavā udaśvitaḥ, which suggests that the exchange value of udaśvit was twice as much as that of yava (barley). The mayaṭ affix also indicates time or fold, as dvimaya, sometimes qualifying the nimāna and sometimes the nimeya.[151]

In a sub-continent like India, where barter and money transactions have co-existed right from the Indus civilisation, it is but natural that the elementary or accidental form of value belonging to the dawn of barter transaction should be muddled with the money form of value.[152] Explaining the rule, V.S. Agrawala equates mūlya, meaning value, with monetary price:

> ...What was given in exchange was considered as equivalent in price (mūlya) to what was received (nimeya). The sūtra Saṁkhyāyā guṇasya nimāne mayaṭ (5.2.47) seeks to regulate the grammatical formation expressing the barter ratio, on the pattern that the price of a portion of one thing is equal to so many portions of the other. For example, dvimayaṁ udaśvid yavānām, 'butter-milk is two-times the value of barley', two parts of barley is the price of one part of butter-milk (udaśvit). The comparison must be made with one portion of nimeya (thing to be bought) with several portions of the nimāna. The ratio must be X:1 but never X:2, or X:3 etc., in which X denotes the nimāna.[153]

Measuring the value of a thing was a specialised affair even in Buddha's time. In the Taṇḍula-nāli Jātaka (5), king Brahma-datta of the Kāsis is shown as having a special officer called 'appraiser of

prices' (argha-kāraka).[154] Though the producer could know the labour-time that went into the manufacture of his product, the value could be known only when it stood face to face with another product which he wanted to purchase with it. The soul-like value that the material form of his product embodied could manifest itself only through the material form of the other product which he wanted to purchase. This value relation of the two products is succinctly expressed by the etymological meaning of nimāna and nimeya, the former denoting a product whose value is to be measured, and the latter denoting a product which measures the value of the former product. Marx defines the nimāna-product as signifying relative value, whose value can be determined or 'delivered' only in relation with another product, and hence it plays the productive and active role of Prakṛti in this economic marriage, while the nimeya product is defined by him as signifying equivalent value which manifests the value of the nimāna-product through its bodily form and it plays the unproductive and passive role of Puruṣa in this economic marriage.

In order to arrive at a clearer understanding of guṇa or the affix mayaṭ which is understood in the sense of portion or parts, we must go into the historical aspect of the barter transaction. Tribal women in Maharashtra still sell their 'commodities' by arranging them in so many small heaps which they call 'vāṭās'. Vāṭā literally means share. As already shown in the sequel of Chapter 4, Kunti divided the whole of the daily alms brought by her five sons into two equal shares, then further subdivided one of them into five shares which were partaken of by herself, Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva, while the remaining half she assigned Bhima. Thus the ratio here was 5:1. With the addition of Draupadi the ratio became 6:1. Kunti bade the bride Draupadi to first satisfy the wants of Brahmins and other needy persons out of the daily alms brought by her husbands, and then divide the remaining alms as follows (I.191.5-6):

> Then the remainder (of the alms) should immediately be divided into two equal shares, one of which should further be subdivided into six shares, four shares for four of my five sons, one for myself and one for thyself, and the other half should be given, O auspicious one, to Bhima.

The appetite value end of Bhīma remains whole, integral, one in number, while the opposite appetite value end fluctuates from five to six. The value relation in a actual barter then will be as follows:

Relative (active) value		*Equivalent (inactive) value*
2 or 3 or 4 etc. shares (guṇa) of barley	=	1 share of buttermilk
2 or 3 or 4 etc. shares of nimāna-product	=	1 share of nimeya-product

Barter transaction takes place in the royal consecration (Rāja-sūya) also between the king on behalf of the tribe of men and the divine king Indra on behalf of the tribe of gods:

Like wares (vasna), O Śatakratu,
Let us barter (krīṇāvahā) food for strength.
Give thou to me; I shall give to thee;
Bestow upon me, I shall bestow upon thee;
Accept my offering;
I shall accept thy offering.[155]

But the original sacrificial barter was between earth and heaven:

...In PB.VII.10.3 and JB.I.145, where because of the separation of Sky and Earth 'Gods and men hungered (aśanayan); for the gods live by what is given hence and men by what is given thence...' "Let us be wedded" (vivahāvahai), they said. . . Yonder world then gave the Dawn to this world as a marriage gift, and this world hence the smoke (of the morning sacrifice); yonder world thence gave the Rain to this world as a marriage gift; and this world hence the Divine Service (devayajanam, the sacrifice of the Gods) to that world. . . .[156]

The magical copulation of the two moieties or sexes (pakṣas or vargas) along with the sacred marriage of the tribal mother and her periodical Brahman representing the earth mother and the moon god, becomes externalised through the barter between two tribes into the sacrificial barter between the tribe of the mortals and the tribe of the divines.

When a particular thing which a tribe can produce in greater quantities and then comes to specialise in its production is brought for exchange not accidently but regularly, its capacity of reflecting its value, instead of being limited to an isolated nimeya thing, expands to a variety of nimeya things. This expanded form of value attained by various commodities (panya) has been meticulously recorded by Indian grammarians:

Pāṇinī's rule	Commentary	Nimāna-commodity	Nimeya-commodity
IV.1.22. V.1.3. VI.2.42	Kāśikā	Blanket (paṇya-kambala) or a measure of wool (kambalya)	Commodities purchased called dvi-kambalya, tri-kambalya, etc.
I.2.50	"	Needle (sūci)	Commodities purchased called pañca-sūciḥ, daśa-sūciḥ, etc.
IV.1.36	Mahābhāṣya	Fish-basket or harpoon (dhivarī)	Commodities purchased called pañca-dhivā, daśa-dhivā, etc.
V.1.27	Kāśikā	Cloth (vasana)	Commodities purchased called vāsana.
V.1.26	"	Winnowing basket or a measure of 2 dronas (śurpa)	Commodities purchased called śaurpa or śaurpika.
I.2.50	"	Sackful of corn (goṇi)	Commodities purchased called pañca-goṇiḥ, daśa-goṇiḥ, etc.
IV.1.22	"	Horse (aśva)	Commodities purchased called pañca-aśvā, daśa-aśvaḥ, etc.
I.2.44 V.1.19	Mahābhāṣya Kāśikā	Cow or bull (go)	Commodities purchased called pañca-guḥ, etc., in general gau-pucchikam.
IV.1.24	"	Slave (puruṣa)*	Commodities purchased called dvi-puruṣā, tri-puruṣaḥ, etc.

*The Smṛtis permit only barter for Brahmins and Kṣatriyas and that also in distress and of prescribed commodities, and not trade in general involving monetary transactions.[157]

But, however a tribe could expand the value-forms of its specialised nimāna-commodity, it could never encompass all the nimeya-commodities; for new varieties of them kept on entering into barter transactions and the nimāna-commodity of a tribe could never become the standard nimāna-product of the rest of the tribes who were participants in the given inter-tribal barter, some tribes being agriculturists, some pastorals, etc. A commodity moveable and easily divisible was needed. Such a commodity was cow or bull. The unique

relief of a magnificent humped bull found on an Indus seal and also found embossed on a coin of Puṣkarāvati, modern Carasadda,[158] clearly denotes that coinage must have been preceded by cattle acting as the nimāna-commodity having the most expanded form of value. A Rg-vedic seer, Vāma-deva Gautama, declares by Rk IV.24.10 that he would barter his Indra in exchange of ten cows:

10. Who for ten milch-kine purchaseth (krīṇāti) from me this Indra who is mine?
When he hath slain the Vritras let the buyer give him back to me?[159]

Siddheshwarshastri Chitrav thinks that the idol of Indra is offered in barter by the mother goddess Indrāṇī herself.[160] Idols had a peculiar function to perform in tribal life. W. Robertson Smith explains:

...The enemies of the god and the enemies of his people are identical; even in the Old Testament, 'the enemies of Jehovah' are originally nothing else than the enemies of Israel. In battle each god fights for his own people, and to his aid success is ascribed; Chermosh gives victory to Moab and Asshur to Assyria; and often the divine image or symbol accompanies the host to battle. When the ark was brought into the camp of Israel, the Philistines said, 'Gods are come into the camp; who can deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods?' They judged from their own practice, for when David defeated them at Baalperazim, part of the booty consisted in their idols, which had been carried in the field. When the Carthagians, in their treaty with Philip of Macedon, speak of 'the gods that take part in the campaign', doubtless refer to the inmates of the sacred tent which was pitched in time of war besides the tent of the general, and before which prisoners were sacrificed after victory. Similarly an Arabian poet says, 'Yaghuth went forth with us against Morad', that is the image of the god Yaghuth was carried into the fray....[161]

In the final duel between Arjuna and Karṇa, the lunar deities ranged themselves on the side (pakṣa) of Arjuna, while the solar deities arrayed themselves on the side of Karṇa (Ādityāḥ Karṇato's bhavan. VIII.87.46-47),[162] and Earth sided with Arjuna, while Heaven took the side of Karṇa (VIII.87.38-39):

Heaven stood verily like a mother on the side of the son of the Suta, (while) Earth desired like a mother the victory of Dhanañjaya.

Pāṇini's rule V.3.99 differentiates between idols meant for subsistence and those for sale. Puri explains:

...Commenting on the Sūtra Jivikārthe cāpaṇye (V.3.99) 'in the case of a life sustenance, serving an object which is an image (pratikṛti), the affix is not used except when the object is saleable,' Patañjali cites as examples the

images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha, when the rule of affixing ka does not apply. The gold-coveting Mauryas caused images of the gods to be prepared, but the rule applies only in such cases where the images provide living for the person who exhibited them to the householders. Weber was of the opinion that 'Pāṇini is referring to images (pratikṛti), that were saleable – that is by their sale afforded sustenance of life (jīvikārthe), had in his eye such as these that had come down from the Mauryas....[163]

But this sale of the images of Skanda, Viśākha, etc., is not an invention of the Mauryas, as is evident from the barter of Indra's image.

As already shown, the original barter is preserved through the ritualistic barter of Earth and Heaven. When this elementary barter develops up to the stage of selecting cow and bull as the general form of value, cow herself becomes identified with Earth (Nighaṇṭu, I.1.1), and with her Soma, the moon god himself starts being purchased in the ritual called 'Soma-krayaṇi':

...Soma the king was among the Gandharvas; the gods and the seers meditated on him, 'How shall Soma the king come hither to us?' Speech (Vak)† Earth mother said, 'The Gandharvas love women; with me as a woman, do you barter it (paṇadhvam)?' 'No,' replied the gods, 'how could we be without you?' She replied, 'Still do ye buy; when you have need of me, then shall I return to you.' 'Be it so,' (they replied). With her as a great naked one they bought Soma the king. In imitation of her they bring up a young immaculate cow to buy Soma. With her they buy Soma the king. Her he may purchase again, for (speech) went back to them....[164]

What is the exchange value of Soma? According to the original matriarchal reality, the rāṣṭrī-devī was eternal and integral or one, while her Brahman consorts were evanescent and multiple. But, the social and economic reality had already advanced far beyond matriarchy. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says:

1. He bargains for the king (Soma); and because he bargains for the king, therefore, any and everything is vendible here. He says, 'Soma seller, is thy king Soma for sale?' 'He is for sale,' says the Soma-seller. 'I will buy him of thee!' – 'Buy him!' says the Soma-seller. – 'I will buy him of thee for one sixteenth (of the cow)'. – 'King Soma, surely, is worth more than that!' 'but great, surely, is the greatness of the cow', says the Adhvaryu.
2. From the cow (comes) fresh milk, from her boiled milk, from her cream, from her sour curds, from her sour cream, from her curdled milk, from her butter, from her ghee, from her clotted curds, from her whey:
3. 'I will buy him of thee for one hoof!' – 'King Soma, surely, is worth more than that!' – says the Soma-seller. – 'Yea, king Soma is worth more than that, but great surely, is the greatness of the cow', replies the Adhvaryu;

and having each time enumerated the same ten virtues, he says, 'I will buy him of thee for one foot,' – 'for half (the cow)', – 'for the cow!' – 'King Soma has been bought!'. . . .[165]

Two underlying realities emerge out of this ritual:

(1) That man (puruṣa) has already become a nimāna-commodity. Earth mother (Vāk) is opposed now not by a free moon god, but a slave Soma. Slavery has become an established fact.

(2) But now the universal mother Vāk is no more equal to multiplicity of Soma puruṣas. Integral Soma is equivalent to multiple Vāk. Soma has now become the universal and integral Puruṣa!

Cow is here divided into sixteen parts, and first with 1/16, then with 1/8, then with 1/4, then with 1/2, and lastly with the whole cow, the bargain for Soma is struck. A cow cannot be divided thus. It is only precious metal, the money form of value, that can be divided into exact fractions like these. Hiraṇya in Sanskrit means any precious metal.[166] Nighaṇṭu (I.2.2) gives Candra or moon as one of the synonyms of hiraṇya. Puruṣa Soma has now become the universal equivalent, reflector of the values of the whole world of commodities.

This peculiar division of the precious metal into sixteen multiples has something to do with ancient Indian coinage. Kosambi, explaining the etymological history of the word Paṇi, denoting the so-called trader caste of the Indus state, observes that the earliest Indian coins tallied in their weight standards exactly with those of Mohenjo-daro.[167] Though post-Indus Indian coinage originated in about the seventh century B.C., its weight standards go back to the Indus civilisation:

> Regular coinage had come into use before the end of the seventh century, to judge by the coins found. The eastern standard of weight for silver coins was the *kārshāpana* of 3.5 grams weight in Magadha, while the solitary Kosalan hoard known is 3/4 *kārshāpana* standard. The weight goes back to the Indus valley culture, which had, in fact, produced accurately cut stone weights of just this magnitude. Taxilian currency belonged to a foreign weight standard just above 11 grams, which would approximate to the Indian rupee in historic times. The *kārshāpana* was of 32 units weight, whereas the frontier coin, shaped like a bent bar, was 100. Originally the coins were issued as silver blanks by the traders themselves, and the weights checked regularly by their guilds during the period of circulation. The checking was shown by tiny marks punched on one side, which guaranteed weight and purity to all who knew the code of guild marks. . . . Some of the punch marks themselves derived from Indus characters, probably from the descendants of the Panis. . . .[168]

In the time of Buddha, a Magadhan Kārṣā-paṇa consisted of 4 Pādas, Pāda literally meaning a quarter, and Pāda coin was made up of 5 Māṣas.[169] Patañjali, commenting on Pāṇini's rule I.2.64, preserves a more ancient tradition by stating that in ancient times a Kārṣā-paṇa consisted of 16 Māṣas. V.S. Agrawala elaborates:

> Kārshāpaṇa was the name of the silver punch-marked coin of which numerous hoards have been found in various parts of India. It was the standard medium of exchange from about the sixth century B.C. onwards. Like the present rupee it had its sub-multiples, of which Pāṇini mentions 1/2 as ardha (V.I.48, ardha-śabdo rūpakārdhasya rūdhiḥ, Kāśikā) and bhāga (V.I.49, bhāga-śabdo'pi rūpakārdhasya vāchakaḥ), 1/4 as pāda (V.I.34) and 1/16 as māsha (V.I.34).[170]

Why did the Kārṣā-paṇa consist exclusively of 16 Māṣas? Māṣa also means a kind of bean, and according to Patañjali (on Pāṇini, I.2.64) every bean consists of 16 seeds. But this seems to be a later thought. Karṣa also means Terminalia Bellerica. The fruit of this tree was called vibhīdaka, and it was used as a die (akṣa) in dicing.[171] As already explained, akṣa and Soma or moon god, were identical. The ancients in India believed that the moon consisted of 16 digits. But how can the moon have 16 digits, when it is known to have 15 of which a fortnight (pakṣa) is made up? The phenomenon was explained by Uddālaka Āruni in the course of a philosophical discourse with his son Śvetaketu in Chāndogya Upainiṣad (VI.7):

> 1. A person (Puruṣa), my dear, consists of sixteen parts (soḍaśa-kalaḥ). For fifteen days do not eat, drink water at will. Breath, which consists of water, will not be cut off from one who drinks water.
>
> 2. Then for fifteen days he (Śvetaketu) did not eat. So then he approached him, saying, 'What shall I say, sir?'
>
> 'The Rig verses, my dear, the Yajus formulas, the Sāman chants.'
>
> Then he said – 'verily, they do not come to me, sir.'
>
> 3. To him he then said: 'Just as, my dear, a single coal of the size of a fire-fly may be left over from a great kindled fire, but with it the fire would not thereafter burn much so, my dear, of your sixteen parts a single sixteenth part may be left over, but with it the fire would not thereafter burn much – so, my dear, of your sixteen parts a single sixteenth part may be left over, but with it you do not apprehend the Vedas. (4) Eat; [4] then you will understand from me.'
>
> 4. Then he ate. So then he approached him. Then whatsoever he asked him, he answered everything. (5) To him he then said:
>
> 5. 'just as, my dear, one may, by covering it with straw, make a single coal of the size of a fire-fly that has been left over from a great kindled fire blaze-up, and with it the fire would thereafter burn much – [6] so, my dear, of your sixteen parts a single sixteenth part has been left over. After having been covered with food, it has blazed up. With it you now apprehend the Vedas. . . .'[172]

Śaṅkarācārya explains the simile as follows – 'By not taking food for fifteen days, like the moon of the dark fort-night, your digits had waned one after another. That single digit which was left over, fed by food, waxed, and has now blazed up.'

The Puruṣa Brahman who used to be periodically sacrificed with the Puruṣa hymn in order to reproduce the tribe and nature, was believed to recreate the mortal world with his fourth part and with his immortal three quarters, the heavens. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says – '. . .everything here consists of sixteen parts and the Purusha-medha is everything. . . .'[173] The Puruṣa-sūkta itself consists of sixteen Rks. Hence, the coinage of the Indus state was modelled on the sixteen digits or kalās of the moon god and the dismemberment of his human representative, the Puruṣa Brahman, into four parts or pādas.

Ancient coinage in general had intimate connection with the moon. The Mauryan imperial mark on their coinage is a crescent on arches. The arches represented, according to Kosambi, heaven, but they could as well be temples.[174] An ancient Semitic coin has on it the temple of Paphos topped by the moon.[175] The drawing of the moon on this coin is that of a sickle enclosing a full moon. This peculiar representation of the moon is to be found on all hero or sati and sacrificial pillars, of wood or of stone, scattered all over the valleys of the Panzra and her tributaries, especially in the talukas of Sakri and Nandurbar of Dhule district in Maharashtra.

All these features of the Indus coinage were till recently retained by the coinage of Kerala. The Fanam (Sanskrit Paṇa), formerly a golden coin and then silver, was used by the Malayalis right up to A.D. 1862. Sixteen copper cash made one Chakram, and four Chakrams made one Fanam. The most ancient golden Fanam was called Rāśi, believed to have been coined by Paraśurāma.[176]

The Soma-krayaṇi ritual of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, already quoted verbatim, enumerates in all ten virtues of the Soma-krayaṇī cow. It has already been demonstrated that the cow here has been substituted for the Earth. The human representative of the earth mother, the tribal mother, was called Rāṭ or Rāṣṭrī. Chāndogya Upaniṣad (IV.3.8) says that Vi-rāṭ consists of ten deities, grouped by Sayugvā Raikva, an Upaniṣadic philosopher, into two classes (saṁ-varga)* of five each (IV.3.1-4):

*This saṁ-varga takes us to the cosmic and tribal moieties of Chapter 2.

– Saṁ-varga of the gods –
(1) Presiding deity Wind, (2) Fire, (3) Sun, (4) Moon, (5) Water.

– Saṁ-varga of the sense organs –
(1) Presiding deity Breath, (2) Speech, (3) Eye, (4) Ear, (5) Mind.

Virāṭ is compared to kṛta, the highest throw in dicing. Though it is distinguished by number four, it takes to itself all the lower throws, i.e., tretā (3), dvāpara (2), and kali (1). Adding 4 + 3 + 2 + 1, we get number ten. Thus kṛta is distinguished by number ten. As already explained, kṛta is a synonym of kaṭa, the winning throw, which also means temple-land. Thus, Vi-rāṭ, from its etymology and its association with the kaṭa temple-land, means earth mother. The same Upaniṣad (IV.3.8) further says that Vi-rāṭ is food and also eater of food. The metre Vi-rāṭ is of ten syllables. Virāṭ, lastly, is the name of the primary matter, or a synonym of Prakṛti.[177]

Śaṅkarācārya, prefacing IV.4 of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, states that the world of food and the ten eaters of food are integrated into one primordial cause and then divided into sixteen parts for expounding the theory of Brahman.

The Mahābhārata version of Sāṅkhya* describes the creation of the universe as follows (XIV.40.9-10):

From Ego (Ahankara) spring the five primary substances – Earth (Pṛthivī), Wind (Vāyu), Space (Ākāśa), Water (Ap), and Fire (Jyoti).
All the beings are made up of these five primary substances and their qualities – sound (śabda), touch (sparśa), colour (rūpa), taste (rasa), and smell (gandha).

With these ten categories integrated, the Vi-rāt Puruṣa is created, and slaughtering him in the Puruṣa-medha and dividing him in sixteen parts, the universe is regenerated.

Sāṅkhya-kārikā (22) groups the five tan-mātras (primary elements) and the eleven organs (five sense organs, five motor organs and the eleventh mind) together and calls it a gaṇa (tribe) of sixteen. All beings are supposed to be made up of this tribe of sixteen. This will become clearer by the following verses of Mahābhārata (XV.II.7-19):

Formerly Vṛtra in truth encompassed this earth. Beholding the earth so encompassed and her quality of smell also appropriated:
The enraged Indra slew him with his thunderbolt –
(Vṛtra then) entered in the waters and appropriated its quality taste.

*The Sāṅkhya-kārikā version (Kārikā 22) reverses the sequence by making the five primary substances the products of the five tan-mātras or primary elements.

Beholding the waters being 'possessed' and its quality taste appropriated by Vṛtra –

Indra slew him out of the waters. Thus Vṛtra successively entered fire, wind and space and appropriated their qualities colour, touch and sound respectively, out of each of which he was slain out by Indra. Lastly, Vṛtra took shelter within Indra himself. According to Pāṇini's rule V.2.93, indriya, meaning organ, is derived from Indra.[178] Hence, 'entering within Indra means entering within the eleven sense and motor organs of Indra. The story ends with the final slaying of Vṛtra out of these eleven organs of Indra. Thus Vṛtra, the Puruṣa Brahman, was made up of this gaṇa of sixteen, ritually slaying whom the universe was regenerated.

The Puruṣa litany of Ṛg-veda (x.90) opens with the chant that the Puruṣa is thousand-headed, thousand-eyed and thousand-footed. With the advent of communal slavery, this ritual conception of the Puruṣa victim becomes transformed into an economic category. When the Brahman Cyavana of the Bhṛgu gotra bade king Nahuṣa buy him off from the fishermen who had pulled him out of the river Ganges along with their fish catch, the king ordered his purohita to pay the fishermen one thousand coins (most probably Kārṣāpaṇas) as the value (mūlya) of the Brahman.[179] A prince was valued at a thousand Nikkas, which seems to be the highest price of a slave. When king Sañjaya of the Śibis asked his grandson Jāli at what price he should buy him off the Brahmin Pūjaka, the prince answered that a thousand Nikkas was the price fixed by his father Vessantara.[180]

The earliest purchase of a Brahman for human sacrifice to Varuṇa is mentioned by Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII.14). Prince Rohita of the Ikṣvākus wanted a substitute in his place for offering as a victim to Varuṇa. He bought Śunaḥśepa Ājigarti for a hundred kine. The Gāmaṇicaṇḍa Jātaka (257) mentions twenty-four Kārṣāpaṇas as the price of a pair of bullocks.[181] The average price of a cow must have been about ten Kārṣāpaṇas; hence, hundred cows were but a substitute of a thousand Kārṣāpaṇas, the ritual price of a purchased Brahman victim.

Seven hundred Kārṣapaṇas seems to have been the average price of a slave, male or female, prevalent some time before Buddha according to the Sattu-bhasta Jātaka (402).[182] Chanana sums up:

> According to the Pali literature, slaves, both men and women, could be purchased for a hundred pieces of money. This was not, however, the only price and must have been one of the many, because the market was not under

> control and besides actual elements such as the consequences of war, other factors like age, health, sex, etc. of the persons offered for sale could also affect the price-level. Hence, it will not be safe to accept the price of a hundred pieces of money as the only price current at that time. Elsewhere a price of seven hundred pieces of money is mentioned but the context does not specify the number of slaves. If we accept the average price per slave to be a hundred pieces of money, then this sum must have sufficed for the purchase of seven slaves. But in the absence of precise information, there is no reason for linking up this sum with a definite number of slaves. Of course nothing could prevent a rich person from paying any price he liked, or even double the due price for any slave, man, woman or child, fancied by him or her.
>
> Buddhaghosa gives us the sum of fifty or sixty pieces of money as the price of a slave. This can be a later quotation (contemporary of Buddhaghosa himself); if not so, then here is a third example. (We may note that the price of a donkey, 'very good at work', was eight *kahapanas*.) Here we may observe that the price of manumision fixed for two princes, thousand nikkhas for a boy and a price amounting to seven hundred in various objects for a girl, seems to be an imaginary price.[183]

In the Sanskrit drama Mṛcchakaṭika (Act VIII), the Saṁvāhaka reminds Vasantasenā that he is the same person who had been bought by her for ten Suvarṇas. A Suvarṇa coin was equivalent to 48 silver Kārṣāpaṇas.[184] Hence, 480 Kārṣāpaṇas seem to have been a normal price of slaves in mediaeval times.

Menon gives the following account of the customs and conditions prevalent regarding the sale and purchase of slaves in Kerala:

> . . .A proprietor in Malabar could always sell his serfs with or without the soil, but to remove them far from their houses would have been considered a cruel and unwarrantable measure, sufficient to cause, and almost justify, desertion. Only in some castes, the wives of slaves might be sold to another master, and, generally speaking, parents were not separated from their children. They might, however, be let out on simple rent or mortgaged under certain deeds. Even after Malabar came under the East India Company, slaves continued to be a marketable commodity. They were sold for the realisation of land revenue as also for decree-debts. On the 15th of November 1836, the Government ordered the remission in the Collector's accounts of Rs.927-13-0, which was the 'annual revenue' from slaves* on the Government lands in Malabar.[185]

An example of a deed of transfer of land along with the slaves working on it has also been given by Menon:

> The following document will be found interesting with regard to the right of

*Calculating on the basis of 2¼ Fanams (annas 11 pies 10) as the average annual rent accruing from a slave of the lowest caste (Pulayas), we get the figure of 694 slaves working on the government lands in Malabar.

passing slaves from one owner to another. Translation of a Tiṭṭuram (Royal writ) from the Raja of Cochin – 'To our Ayyanāṭṭ Kṛshnan – You are hereby authorised to hold and enjoy, on Anubhōkam tenure (a perpetual one), the following landed properties, etc., XX and to exercise the right of proprietorship over the *slaves* named Chāṭṭan, son of Iṭṭipengan and Kurumba XX Dated Chirakkal Kovilakan, 157 M.E. (1782 A.D.). Written in the handwriting of Cheṟuparampaṭṭ XX.'[186]

Menon also gives a graphic account of the prices of slaves and rent received from their work:

According to Burton, the price of a slave varied from £3 to £8. Mr. E.B. Thomas, the Judge of Calicut, writing on the 24th of November 1841, to the Sadr Adalat, said that the average cost of a young male under 10 years was about £3-8-0, of a female somewhat less. But in some Taluks, women fetched higher prices in order to breed slaves. An infant, ten months old, was sold in a court auction, on 10th August 1841, for Rs.1-10-6, independent of the price of its mother. And in a recent suit, the right of 27 slaves was the 'sole matter of litigation, and it was disposed of on its merits.' Again, according to Mr. James Vaughan's report, quoted by Commissioner Graeme, . . .the largest sum the highest class slave will fetch is 250 old gold fanams equal to £6-5 sh. and the highest rent, 7¼ fanams per annum, equal to 3 sh. 9 d.; but the average selling price of all castes (of which Mr. Vaughan enumerates 20) is 132 old gold fanams equal to £3-6 sh., and average annual rent 5 fanams, equal to 2 sh. 6d., while the prices of the 'lowly Pulaya Chermars' who compose more than half the aggregate slave population are still less than the lowest of the other castes and are for a man 48 fanams, equal to £1-4 sh., a woman, 36 fanams, equal to 15 sh., a boy (average), 20 fanams, equal to 10 sh. and a girl (average) 15, equal to 7 sh. 6d.; while the annual rents of the two first are 2¼ fanams, equal to 1 sh. and 1 sh. 3 d. In Travancore, before emancipation, George Mathan wrote that the price of a slave was usually Rs.6, but in Malappelly it was Rs.18.[187]

A slave was auctioned or sold like any other commodity. It is a long-established custom to auction any thing in a market by the broker shouting the price of it thrice – 'eka vāra, do vāra, tina vāra!' The sacred number three again makes its appearance. The number originated from the threefold character of the tribal mother and her divine projection. With her three attributes the tribal mother regenerated her classless tribe and nature. The selfsame sacred number was now used to sell into slavery the majority of her descendants: 'Prakṛtayaḥ'!

Slave-owners and brokers used to shout in 'poetical' terms the physical and intellectual accomplishments of their human commodities while selling them in tribal assemblies and councils and later in slave markets. Mahābhārata provides the best illustration. Staking his brothers one after another in the game at dice, Yudhiṣṭhira described the beauty of Nakula, the wisdom of Sahadeva, the unsurpassed bravery of Arjuna, and the unrivalled might of Bhima (II.65.12-25). Laconic when staking himself, he spared no words when staking Draupadi (II.65.33-39):

I stake her who is not too short, nor too tall, nor too thin, nor too fat, who has ravenblack curly hair –

Whose eyes are like autumnal lotus, the fragrance of whose body is like autumnal lotus, who relishes autumnal lotus, in beauty who is Lakṣmi incarnate –

Of spotless fame, endowed with a wealth of beauty and virtues, as is desired by many in woman –

Gifted with all qualities, agreeably disposed, a pleasant speaker: the accomplishments that are desired by man in religious, erotic and economic objectives –

Last to sleep and first to rise, who knows everything that is done or undone by cowherds and shepherds –

All these examples of the sale and purchase of slaves, it is true, pertain to the Dāsa kind of slaves, and not to that of the Śūdra category. Vidura's case will help us solve this problem. Repelled by the ugliness of Vyāsa, the eldest widow of king Vicitravirya, Ambikā, sent her beautiful Dāsi to copulate with him in her stead. Elated with the joy she gave him in the intercourse, He 'manumitted her' from slavery.[188] But, though she 'ceased' to be a Dāsī, she remained, nevertheless, a Śūdrā, and, further, it is repeatedly said that Vidura was born in the slave caste (Śūdra-yonāv ajāyata. I.105.30; I.107.16,18). Vidura was married by Bhiṣma with the Pāraśavi daughter of king Devaka (I.113, 12, 13). Pāraśavī means the daughter of a Śūdrā by a Brahmin male. When Dhṛtarāṣṭra bade Vidura teach him the Brahma doctrine, he answered that being born in the Śudra caste, he was not entitled to teach the doctrine of Brahma to him (V.41.5). It means that he was not a full member of the Kuru tribe, and his Kṣattā-hood (Kartā-hood) denotes that he was the Kartā of the communal agrestic slaves of the royal clan of the Kuru tribe. This part of the folk tradition has been preserved intact by Vidhura Jātaka. Mahābhārata even in its present form lets out the truth. Vidura, instructing Dhṛtarāṣṭra in Udyoga-parva (36.33), declares that no tiller should be born in the royal clan of the Kurus. In

the same parva (132.31), Kunti bids Kṛṣṇa to provoke Yudhiṣṭhira to war, and tells him to remind Yudhiṣṭhira the duties of his Kṣatriya caste which forbid a Kṣatriya to beg like a Brahmin or till the land like a Vaiśya. Nevertheless, in his instructions to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura says (V.88.12):

(A king) should appoint his uncle* to look after the quarters of royal women, and should put his mother in charge of the royal kitchen. Cattle should be given in charge of one like himself, while agricultural work in crown lands should be personally superintended by him.

Duryodhana is shown personally going to inspect the royal cattle herds when they approach Hastināpur (II.238-240). K.A. Nilakanta Shastri explains:

...Duryodhana is reminded by an official...that the time has come for taking a census of the cattle in the villages (ghoṣas) and for marking (branding?) the calves....

Freely rendered, the passage means that the king passed in review cattle by hundreds and thousands, and caused them to be marked by symbols (number?). He also numbered the calves, and identified those fit for taming, besides counting the cows with young calves. Finally he listed the three years old bulls.[190]

The word lakṣaṇa is explained by Pāṇini as a mark branded on cattle:

...Lakshaṇa denoted the marks branded on the body, generally ears, of cattle to distinguish ownership (paśūnām svāmi-viśesha-sambandha-jñāpanārtham, Kāśikā, VI.3.115). Pāṇini refers to the branding of cows in two sūtras 1) Karṇo varṇa-lakshṇāt (VI.2.112), 2) Karṇe lakshaṇasy-āvishṭa-ashṭa-pañcha-maṇi-bhinnacchinna-cchidra-sruva-svastikasya (VI.3.115).[191]

The branding of cattle goes back at least to early Vedic period:

The branding of cows was known in the Vedic period. The Atharvaveda refers to it as lakshma and mentions the maithuna mark (VI.141.2-3; XIII.4.6). The Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā (IV.2.9), Mānava Śrauta Sūtra (IX.5.1-3), and Gonāmika Pariśishṭa of the Varāha Śrauta Sūtra give details of this ancient cattle rite and add a few more marks (*Journal of Vedic Studies*, Lahore, Jan. 1934, pp. 16 ff.). The Mahābhārata also refers to a census of the royal cattle (smāraṇa, Vanaparva, Ghoshayātrā, 239.4). The Arthaśastra prescribes it for the Superintendent of Cows to 'register the branded marks, natural marks, colour and the spread of the horns of each of the cattle as part

*Though the term for a paternal uncle, pitṛvya, occurs in the epic, it is rarely used in it. Paternal uncles, own or collateral, are referred to by the term pitā which denotes one's own father.[189]

of his duties relating to the cow-pen (vraja-paryagra, Arth. II.29, p. 129). The Edicts of Aśoka empatically disallow the branding of horses and bullocks on certain specified days (Pillar Edict, V)....[192]

The marks (lakṣaṇas) branded on cattle are enumerated as follows:

...Pāṇini mentions nine marks (VI3.115), to which other names may be added from the Maitrayaṇi Saṁhitā, Ṛik-Tantra and Kāśikā, as shown below. Vishṭa-karṇi, a mark in Pāṇini's list is in the Maitrāyaṇi Saṁhitā a mark of the cows of Agastya, those of Jamadagni having a lute and of Vaisishṭha a stake (Vedic Index, I.46). The Ashṭakarṇi of Pāṇini occurs in the Ṛigveda (x.62.7) where Grassman translates 'having the sign for (the number) 8 marked on the ear' (Vedic Index, V.I.46). The use of the numericals 5 and 8 as marks put on the ears of cattle shows that writing was popularly known (Goldstucker, *Pāṇini, His Place in Sanskrit Literature*, p. 44).

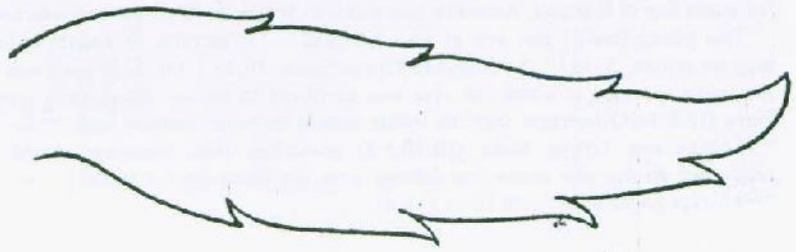
Some of these marks (lakshaṇa) can be identified among the symbols stamped on punch mark coins, e.g. [1]Sruva, [2]Swastika, [3]Aṅkuśa, [4]kuṇḍala, [5]plīhā, [6]bāṇa, [7]maithuna.

193

Vedic Index (I.46) adds one more mark to the list given above, '...the mark of a sickle on the ear (dātra-karṇyaḥ)....'

Early Vedic people could not be expected to know modern numerals. Their predecessors, the Indus people, as also peoples of other ancient riparian civilisations, knew only the pictographic and ideographic scripts. The first ever phonetic script was invented by the Phoenician traders before the sixth century.[194] Hence, the thousand aṣṭa-karṇi cows received by the Ṛg-vedic seer Nābhānediṣṭa must have had their ears clipped at eight points, as is still done in Maharashtra, which can be illustrated as in Diagram 11.

Diagram 11



The branding of three-year-old bulls done under the supervision of Duryodhana was not simply for the purpose of identification. That these bulls were then sent to till the crown lands becomes evident from the Artha-śāstra. The department of the Go-adhyakṣa, meaning the Superintendent of cows (II.45), was mainly meant for supplying drought oxen and buffaloes to the Superintendent of the crown lands (Sītā-adhyakṣa):

(5) When the Superintendent (of cows) classifies cattle as calves, steers, tameable ones (damya), drought oxen (vahinah), bulls that are to be trained to yoke (ukṣāṇaḥ),* bulls kept for crossing cows (vṛṣāḥ)**. . .buffaloes and drought buffaloes; female calves, female steer, heifer, pregnant cows, milch cattle, barren cattle – either cows or buffaloes; calves that are a month or two old as well as those which are still younger, and when, as he ought to, he brands*** them all, inclusive of their calves of one or two months old along with those stray cattle which have remained unclaimed in the herds for a month or two; and when he registers the branded marks, natural marks, colour and the distance from one horn to another of each of the cattle, that system is known as 'class of herds' (vraja-paryagram)![195]

Drought oxen were called by a special term: karmakara-balīvarda.[196] The breaking of the bulls to the plough was enjoined to be performed in prescribed months and in the manner fixed by convention, contravention of which resulted in punishment of the offender.[197]

There were two modes of tending the royal cattle: (1) herds maintained directly through paying wages to those who tended them; (2) herds surrendered for a fixed amount of dairy produce. It is the former mode we are concerned with. In this 'vetana-upagrāhika' system cows and buffaloes were grouped into herds of hundred heads**** and each herd was given in charge of following five persons:

*Amara-koṣa (1825-1829) gives words for a herd of uskṣans: aukṣakam, mighty ukṣan: mahokṣa, old ukṣan: vṛddhokṣa, and new-born ukṣan: jātokṣa, but not for any other type of bulls.

**Vṛṣa-utsarga was a ritual in which the best bull of the herd was set at large on the full moon day of Kārttika. Adorning him and four best cows of the herd, it was said.

'This young (bull) I give you as your husband. . . . In increase of wealth, in food may we rejoice. Svāhā!' (Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra, III.11.1-14). Śūla-gava was an Autumnal sacrifice in which the vṛṣa was sacrificed to Rudra. Āśvalayana Gṛhya Sūtra (IV.8.1-38) instructs that the owner should let loose another vṛṣa.

***Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (III.10.1-2) prescribes that branding should be performed on the new moon that follows after the Phālguna full moon.

****Virāṭa-parva (10.9) calls them vargas.

(1) cowherd (go-pālaka),
(2) buffalo-herd (piṇḍāraka),
(3) milker (dohaka),
(4) Churner (manthaka),
(5) hunter (lubdhaka).*

They were to be paid either in cash (60 paṇas per year) or in kind (one āḍhaka of grain per year) (V.91). Cattle, slaves and servants were doctored by persons who are mentioned by one compound 'catuṣ-pada-dvipada-paricāraka' (V.91), and they were also paid at the same rates (60 paṇas or 1 āḍhaka grains). These wages differed very little from that of the slaves:

. . .A *paṇa* and a quarter per month plus cooked rice (bhakta) should be given to slaves and servants according to their share in sowing (the crown lands).[198]

Nala served king Ṛtuparṇa of the Kosalas as his superintendent of horses (aśva-adhyakṣa. III.67.6). The youngest Pāṇḍavas, Nakula and Sahadeva, served king Virāṭa of the Matsyas as his go-saṅkhyātā and aśva-bandha respectively (IV.3.3-13). The cattleherds of king Lomapāda of the Aṅgas and king Kaṁsa of the Yādavas, as already shown, were communal slaves. And crown lands, according to Kautalya, were to be cultivated by slaves and craftsmen. Hence, it will be logical to conclude that the royal cattle were also tended predominantly by slaves.

Royal officials, called rāja-kartās or king's jewels (ratnins), participated in the royal consecration. The names of these kartas and their respective deities are given in the Table 1 with their counterparts in matriarchy, matrilineal, and patriarchal theocratic monarchies and oligarchy.

That the Bhatta-uddesaka must have been an important and organic official in the oligarchic system becomes evident from the description of the Mucukarṇas left to us by the Greeks: '. . .The citizens took their meals in common. . . .'[199]

The Kira-patika (Sanskrit Kriyā-pati) seems to have been an official in the oligarchic system equivalent to the Kartā of matrilineal societies, a classless one like the Khasis as well as a slave one like the Malayalis. When Buddha was sojourning at Vaiśāli of the Vajjis, a poor craftsman took into his head to invite Buddha and his

*Lubdhaka Ceta of the Vessantara Jātaka.

TABLE I: Theocratic Monarchy

S. No.	Matriarchy	Matrilineal Monarchy (Not of Asura but Travancore type)	Patriarchal Monarchy Kartās according to – Black Yajur-veda (I.8)	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (Kāṇḍa V)	Corresponding Deity	Oligarchy (Saṅgha-gaṇa)
1	Brahman (Periodical Kartā consort)	Nambūtiri Brahmin (Queen's consort)	Brahman (Chief priest)	Purohita (Royal chaplain)	Brhas-pati (Divine Brahman or chaplain)	Rāja
2	Rāṣṭrī-devi	Rāja (Eldest son of Mūṭṭa Tampurāṭṭi)	Rājanya (Candidate for kingship)	Rājan (King)	Indra (King of gods)	
3	Ambā (Bhārati or Vāk)	Mūṭṭa Tampurāṭṭi (Senior queen of Aṭṭingal)	Mahiṣi (Chief queen)		Aditi (Mother of gods)	Gaṇikā (Courtezan)
4	Ambikā (Sarasvatī)	Iḷaya Tampurāṭṭi (Junior queen of Aṭṭingal)	Vāvātā (Favourite queen of Vaiśya varṇa)	—	Bhaga Deity of womb/share)	
5	Ambālikā (Iḷā or food)	—	Parivṛkti (Discarded queen of Śūdra varṇa)	—	Nirṛti Deity of death)	—
6	Vīra (?) (Ambā's brother)	—	Senāni (Army commander)		Agni (Deity of fire)	Senā-pati (army commander)
7	—	Nāṭuvali (Head of district)	Suta (Charioteer/ minstrel)	(Minstrel/ chroicler)	Varuṇa (Deity of water)	Sutta-dhara
8	Janī (Jñātṛ or Janapada-kalyāṇī)	Dēśavāli (Head of desam)	Grāmaṇī (Village headman)		Maruts (Divine peasants)	Gāmaṇi
9	Kula-pā (tā)	Karanaver (Maternal uncle)	(Treasurer/ charioteer)	Kṣattā (Chamberlain)	Savitā (Sun god)	Kira-patika
10	—	—		Saṅgṛhitā (Charioteer)	Aśvin twins	Bhaṇḍāgārika
11	—	—	Bhāga-dugha (Tax Collector)		Pūṣan (Apportioner)	Bhatta-uddesaka
12	—	—	Akṣā-vāpa (Superintendent of gambling)		Rudra	Salākag-gahāpaka
13	—	—	—	Go-vikartana (Hunter)	,,	—
14	—	—	—	Pālāgala (Courier)	—	—
15	—	Eṭṭuviṭṭil Pillamar (Aṣṭa-kulika)	—	—	—	Aṭṭha-kulaka

fraternity of monks for a meal in the same manner as he saw the affluent oligarchs doing. He approached the Kirapatika and requested him to pay the wages due to him, explaining that he wanted to invite Buddha and his fraternity of monks for a meal.[200]

The Salākag-gahāpaka is found listed as a slave by the Arthaśāstra! According to it (II.31), the following persons constituted the 'viṣṭi', meaning unpaid labour:

1. Mārjaka of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – sweeper.
2. Ārakṣaka of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – watchman.
3. Dhāraka of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – weigher.
4. Māyaka of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – ?
5. Māpaka of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – measurer.
6. Dāyaka of the store house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – ?
7. Dāpaka of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – ?
8. Salākaggahāpaka of the store-house (koṣṭha-agāra) – ?
9. Dāsa-karmakara varga of the store-house (koṣṭha-āgāra) – constitute a class of slaves and craftsmen.

Rāmāyaṇa (II.82.20) uses the term 'viṣṭikarmāntikaḥ'. Karma-anta also means cultivated land, and in the given context it should mean rāṣṭra communal land, and thus the compound word means slaves and craftsmen of the rāṣṭra communal land of the Kosalas. The terms 'viṣṭi-kara' and 'viṣṭi-kārin' occur in Mahābhārata (III.189.73; XII.59.41), which apparently mean the superintendent of the viṣṭi or of the dāsa-karmakara-varga. The kṣattā Vidhura of the theocratic monarchical Kurus of the Jātaka and the Kira-patika of the oligarchic Vajjis seem to have discharged the same function as the viṣṭi-kārin of the Kosalas and the Kurus of the epics.

In Vaiśālī every one of the 7,707 oligarchs is stated to have had his own bhaṇḍa-āgārika, meaning storekeeper. The slave Kaṭāhaka was appointed to the post of bhaṇḍa-āgārika by his master.

The tribal mother of matriarchy combined in herself all these functions of kira-patika, bhaṇḍa-āgārika, bhatta-uddesaka and salākag-gahāpaka. With the advent and progress of slavery, all these functions, which now ensured equality in the ruling tribe, came to be performed by slaves one after another!

To return to our point: the case of the Kṣattā Vidura points out that a Śūdra was a slave for life, and he could not be redeemed or manumitted like a Dāsa. Manu declares (VIII.414):

414. A Śūdra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from servitude; since that is innate in him, who can set him free from it?[201]

Manu furnishes testimony to the fact that the Śūdras also were bought and sold like the Dāsas (VIII.413):

413. But a Śūdra, whether bought or unbought, he may compel to do servile work; for he was created by the creator to be a slave of Brāhmaṇa.[202]

Let us now examine the categories of slaves that were prevalent in ancient times:

1. Paṇa-dāsa (slave through bet) – One of the ancient and *internal* forms of slavery possible in a system where a whole tribe enslaved another tribe or its constituents: e.g., the Kādraveyas enslaving their cousins, the Sauparṇeyas,[203] and the Kauravas enslaving their cousins, the Pāṇḍavas (II.65). It was redeemable. For Suparṇi was told by Kadrū that she could emancipate herself by bringing Soma for her from the celestial regions. The Pāṇḍavas were manumitted by Dhṛtarāṣṭra himself (II.71.27-33). The category 'paṇe jitaḥ' (obtained in bet) in Nārada (Vyav.v.25) pertains to persons outside the kinship circle. Nārada belongs to a period (A.D. 100 to 300) when feudalism had long since been established. The term paṇa itself denotes that a slave of such a category was identified with a commodity (paṇya), 'purchased' in an economic transaction; hence release from such a bondage also was visualised as an economic transaction. Kadrū is shown telling Suparṇi that she would 'buy her release' (niṣ krīṇa) after delivering the Soma. Hence, this category of slaves should be classed as 'purchased'.

2. Yuddha-jita Dāsa (slave of war) – The ritual of 'yuddha-jita' described by Mahābhārata needs closer examination. Bhīma is shown performing this ritual on the captured king of the Sindhus, Jayadratha (III.272.9-11):

Having said this (to Arjuna), the wolf-bellied one (Bhīma), without a further word, shaved his (Jayadratha's) head in five parts with his sickle-headed arrow.

Humiliating the king (Jayadratha) thus, the wolf-bellied one said to him: 'If you desire to live, O fool, then give heed to what I say. If you will declare in the assembly as well as the council of the tribe the words "I am (your) slave," then I shall grant you your life; for such is the ritual of (enslaving) a prisoner of war.'

After taking Jayadratha before Yudhiṣṭhira (II.272.16):

Bhīma said to the king (Yudhiṣṭhira), 'Let it be told to **Draupadī** that this wicked-souled one has become the slave of the sons of **Paṇḍu.**'

This ritual is a reminder of the fact that before war-captives came to be spared for slavery, they used to be slaughtered and eaten by the victor tribe. Mahā-Sutasoma Jātaka (537) tells us that when Mahā-Sutasoma released the hundred kings from the clutches of the cannibal ex-king of the Kāsis, he persuaded the man-eater to send them to their respective kingdoms, for he was afraid that otherwise he would either make Dāsas of his victims or sell them into slavery.[204]

A war-prisoner's life was spared only if he declared in the tribal assembly or council of the victors that he was their slave, which clearly means that he became the slave of not the person who caught him, but of the whole victor tribe. This was also the manner in which a whole tribe of war-prisoners must have been treated. It was thus that the Nāga-Muṇḍa tribe must have been defeated and enslaved by the Śākyas. In his indiscriminate messacre of the Śākyas king Viḍūḍabha of Kosala spared only those who held grass in their mouths, which apparently denoted that they were the two-footed animals of the victor. Viḍūḍabha must certainly have remembered that it was thus that the Śākyas had enslaved his slave grandmother's free forefathers.

The category of war-slave is called 'ruddha' in Jaina canons,[205] 'Karamara-ānito' in Buddhist canons,[206] 'dhvaja-āhṛta' by Kauṭalya (III.69) and Manu (III.415), and 'prāpto yuddhāt' by Nārada.[207] Such a slave woman is called 'karimāri' by Hāla's Gātha Saptaśatī (I.54, 55):

O karimari! why are you given to vain horripilations? For it is not the thunder of your husband's bow, but the crash of lightning hurled out by untimely clouds!

Though slaves of war could be redeemed according to Kauṭalya, the rule laid down by him precludes the release of a non-Aryan from slavery (III.69):

An Arya 'carried with a flag' [slave-of-war] can be released either in consideration of the period spent by him in service [of his captor] or for half his price.[208]

It means that tribes 'alien' to Aryans or non-Aryans could be enslaved for life.

3. Āmāya Dāsa (temple and later 'born' slave) – Its synonyms Kaṭa-āha(ta)ka, Ceṭa, Deva-dāsa, etc. have already been explained.

Āmāya Dāsa came to be interpreted, after the passing away of temple-land slavery, as born in the house. The category of the house-born slave is called 'gṛha-jāta' by Kauṭalya (III.69), Manu (VIII.415), and Nārada (Vyav.V.24). The gṛha-jāta category cannot be considered as a class by itself, for the progenitor or progenitress of such a slave must have been either a slave of war or one purchased from outside the ruling tribe, the tribal constitution in its heyday precluding the very possibility of the sale or purchase of co-tribesman. When Yudhiṣṭhira was told that the Gandharvas were taking away the defeated Kauravas as captives to be enslaved by them, he remonstrated with the exulting Bhīma thus (III.243.2-3):

Differences, quarrels and feuds in the kinsmen (of a kindred tribe) are bound to crop up constantly, O wolf-bellied one! But that does not do away with the (obligatory) duty of a clan (towards another kindred clan).

When an alien (tribe) overpowers kindreds (from one's own or another tribe), it is the duty of wise people not to put up with this aggression from outsiders.

The categories of 'gabbha' in Jaina canons,[209] 'dattrima' (given) and 'paitṛka' (inherited) in Manu (VIII.415), 'labdha' (received as gift), 'dāyāda-upāgata' (inherited) and 'vaḍavā-hṛta (slave through cohabitation with a female slave) in Nārada (Vyav.V.24, 26) fall in the category of gṛha-jāta. Slaves of these categories were unredeemable.

4. Krita Dāsa (purchased slave) – This category is called 'kiya' in Jaina canons,[210] 'dhanak-kīta' in Buddhist canons,[211] 'krīta' by Kauṭalya (III.69), Manu (VIII.415), and Nārada (Vyav.V.24), and 'paṇyam' in Kerala. As already explained, purchase of slaves through barter, e.g., Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti, or through money, e.g., Cyavana Bhārgava, could take place exclusively through inter-tribal transactions and not within the ruling tribe. Taking into consideration the technological development of the Indus and similar civilisations and their resultant capacity to send into circulation commodities and money, it will be ridiculous to imagine that their temple-land slave force was mainly recruited from purchased slaves. The categories of 'aṇaya' (debt-slave) and 'dub-bhikkha' (slave due to famine) in Jaina canons,[212] 'udaradāsa' (slave of stomach), 'āhitaka' (mortgaged) and 'ātma-vikrayin' (self-seller) in Kauṭalya (III.69), 'bhakta-dāsa' (slave of rice) in Manu (VIII.415) and Nārada (Vyav.V.24), 'mahato ṛnāt mocitaḥ' (freed from big debt), 'svāminā āhitaḥ' (mortgaged by master), ātmanaḥ vikretā (self-seller), 'paṇe jitaḥ' (obtained in bet), 'tava aham iti upagataḥ' (slave with the declaration 'I am your

[slave]') and 'anākāla-bhṛtaḥ' (slave due to being maintained during famine) in Nārada (Vyav.V.24-26) should also be included in the krita category; for all of them have exchange, in the forms of barter, money, food, etc. as their source. Slaves of the categories of udara-dāsa and krita were considered unredeemable according to Kautalya, though some protection was offered to them by law.[213]

5. Daṇḍa-dāsa (slave through sentence) – This category is called daṇḍa-praṇita' in Kautalya (III.69), 'daṇḍa-dāsa' in Manu (VIII.415), 'kṛta' in Nārada (Vyav.V.25), and 'kāṇam' in Kerala. The category, 'pravrajyā-avasitaḥ' (deserter from ascetic life) listed by Nārada (Vyav.V.25) should also be classified as daṇḍa-dāsa. The slaves that worked the mines of Egypt and Spain in the first century B.C., according to Diodorus, were drawn mainly from the categories of war-captives and sentenced slaves.[214]

We can now conclude that the main source of communal slaves, either of the Dāsa or of the Sudra type, was war-slaves, the other kinds of categories reinforcing it to greater or lesser extent. Śūdra slavery did not originate within the Aryan tribe by defrauding a section of it of its right of initiation as contended by Ambedkar, but by enslaving the 'Śūdra' tribals living on the banks of Sarasvati.[215]

All categories of slaves thus, as shown in Table 2, can be classified under four main heads – 1. slave of war, 2. born slave, 3. purchased slave, and 4. sentenced slave – the first three contributing to the ranks of communal slaves the most.

After having established that temple-land slavery came into being through defeating and enslaving a tribe, let us turn to another aspect of the origin of this slavery. As already noted, the ritual of enslaving a captive also denotes that a captive who refused to declare himself a slave before the victor tribal assembly or council was killed. The basic term for a slave itself supports this contention. Sarmiṣṭhā tells king Yayāti that she is the 'bhujisyā' (female slave) of his queen Devayani (I.82.23). Draupadī says in reply to Sudeṣṇā, queen of king Virāṭa of the Matsyas, that she is but a bhujisyā of the Sairandhri category (IV.9.17). Gratified by the sexual satisfaction given by queen Ambikā's female slave, the would-be mother of Vidura, Vyāsa blesses her by declaring – 'You will become a-bhujisyā (non-Dāsī)!' (I.105.27). Pānini's rule I.3.66, giving two basic meanings of the root bhuj, namely to eat and to rule, directs that if the root is to be used in the former sense then it takes only ātmanepada affixes, and if in the latter sense then only parasmaipada affixes. The derivative bhujisya

TABLE 2: **Categories of Slaves**

Source	Slave of War	Born Slave	Purchased slave	Sentenced slave
Rg-veda	Indra's 2 female slaves (Rk V.30.9)	(2) Uṣas' Dāsa-pravarga (Rks I.124.1, 12; I.92.8)	(4) Śunaḥśepa Ājigarti	
		(3) Slaves of sacrificial gift (dakṣiṇā) Chapter XIV)	(Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII.14) (5) Gambler (Rk X.34.4, 10)	
Taittirīya Saṃhitā (B.C. 1000-800)		(1) Udahārī (VII.5.10)	(2) Suparṇi (VI.1.6)	
Rāmāyaṇa (B.C. 1000)		Jñāti-dāsī:- Manthara		
Mahābhārata (B.C. 850)	(1) Yuddhajita Dāsa Jayadratha (III.272) Susarman (IV.33)	(2) Phratry-slave: Gaṇḍā and Paśusakha (XIII.93) (3) Bandhakī (II.68.35)	(4) Slave through dicing: Pāṇḍavas of Kauravas (II.65) (5) Voluntary slave: Pāṇḍavas of Virāṭa (V.161.29) (6) Purchased slave:- Gyavana Bhargava (XIII.51.6)	
Jaina Canons (B.C. 600)	(1) Ruddha	(2) Gabbha	(3) Kīya (4) Anāya	(6) Sāvaraha
Buddhist Cannons (B.C. 600)	(1) Karamara anito	(2) Anto-jāto Āmaya Dāso (Jātaka 546) Agreste Dāsa (465) Jñāti-dāsī of Sudinna and Raṭṭhapāla	(5) Dubbhikkha (3) Dhanak-kito (3) Sayam Dāsa	(5) Gamabhojaka made village slave (Jātaka 31)

		Kumbha-dāsi (Jātaka 545)		
		Bandhaki (Vinaya-piṭaka)		
		(2) Gṛha-jāta	(5) Krita	(9)
Artha-sastra (III.69) (B.C. 300)	(1) Dhvaja-āhṛta	(3) Dāya-āgata	(6) Āhitaka	Daṇḍa-praṇita
		(4) Labdha	(7) Ātma-vikrayin	
			(8) Udara-dāsa	
		(2) Gṛha-jata	(5) Krita	(7)
Manu-smṛti (VIII.415)	(1) Dhvaja-āhṛta	(3) Dattrima	(6) Bhakta-dāsa	Daṇḍa-dāsa
		(4) Paitṛka		
		Rāmā		
Vasiṣṭha-smṛti (XVIII.17.18)	–		(6) Krita	(14)
		(2) Gṛha-jāta	(7) Bhakta-dāsa	Krta
Nārada-smṛti (Vyav. V.24-26)	(1) Prāpto yuddhāt	(3) Labdha	(8) Mahato ṛāt mocitah	(15)
		(4) Dāyāda-upagata	(9) Svaminā āhitah	Pravrajyā-avasita
		(5) Vādavā-hṛta	(10) Ātmanah vikretā	
			(11) Pane jitah	
			(12) Tava aham iti upāgatah	
			(13) Anākāla-bhṛta	
		(1) Jenmam	(2) Paṇayam	(3) Kānam
Kerala				

can in no way be taken in the latter sense. The derivatives of the root used in the Kaṭāhaka Jātaka (125) shows conclusively that the derivatives used in the case of slaves are exclusively in the sense of eating. When the slave Kaṭāhaka was appointed by his merchant-master as his storekeeper, he thought to himself:

> ...'Not always...will one care to let me have the office of a store-keeper; one good day some defect will be noticed in me and then people will thrash me, lock me up, brand me and give me the food of a slave to eat' (tāḷetvā bandhitvā lakkhaṇena aṅketvā dāsaparibhogena pi paribhuñjissanti. I.451)....[216]

Here two derivatives of bhuj are used: bhoga, meaning food, and pari-bhuñjissanti, meaning to eat. Thus, when it was not possible to use captives as agrestic slaves, they were killed by the victor tribe and eaten.

When Addhimutta thera (elderly Buddhist monk) was caught by some tribals who were in need of a human victim for their sacrifice, their Gāmaṇī (phratry or clan leader), amazed at the calm and fearless demeanour of the thera, asked him:

> Those who were formerly slaughtered by us either for our sacrifices or for money used to tremble and wail with fear![217]

From these uncivilised cannibal tribals, let us turn to the civilised Aryan tribals. The Soma-seller in the ritual of Soma-purchase used to be represented by a Śūdra, a communal slave.[218] The beating and driving away of this Śūdra Soma-seller leads us to conjecture that formerly he was actually sacrificed. Soma was now represented by the Brahman of the enslaved tribe, and hence instead of the Brahman of the ruling tribe, the Brahman Kartā of the enslaved tribe was now 'ritually' purchased and sacrificed, not *by* the tribal *mother* as of yore, but *to* the tribal mother *goddess*, as Kattā Vidhura was to have been sacrificed to Vimalā, the mother goddess of the Kurus, who had now become the wife of Varuṇa.

Not only the slave Brahman Kartā, but the whole tribe of Dāsas (etymologically agrestic slaves) could be slain at will. Vidhura told king Dhanañjaya of the Kurus:

> You are the master and god of the Dāsa, O Indra of the mortals. Hence, you can beat me or burn me or kill me. I bear no ill-will against you. I am going.[219]

The human sacrifice (Puruṣa-medha) enjoins that 184 human vic-

tims should be sacrificed in it[220] to the chant of the Rg-vedic Puruṣa-sukta (X.90). The compilation of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa was completed in B.C. 600. Hence, it explains away the gory sacrifice by declaring that it was but a symbolical sacrifice, all the 184 human victims tied to more than eleven sacrificial posts being released after reciting the Puruṣa-sūkta and carrying the fire round them:

12. By means of the Purusha Nārāyaṇa (litany), the Brāhmaṇa priest (seated) to the right (south) of them, praises the men bound (to the posts) with the sixteen versed (hymn, Rg-v. 'X.90, Vāj. S. XXI.1-16), 'The thousand-headed Purusha, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed. . . .' Thus (he does) for the obtainment and the securing of everything, for everything here consists of sixteen parts, and the Purusha-medha is everything: in thus saying, 'he praises and thereby indeed magnifies him (Purusha), but also thereby speaks of him, such as he is'. Now, the victims had had the fire carried round them, but they were not yet slaughtered. –

13. Then a voice said to him, 'Purusha, do not consummate these human victims: if thou were to consummate them, man ((purusha) would eat man'. Accordingly, as soon as the fire had been carried round them, he set them free, and offered oblations to the same divinities.[221]

The commentary explicitly states that if the prescribed human victims were actually killed, according to the rule of partaking sacrificial victims, men (sacrificers) would be constrained to eat human flesh.[222] This remark of the commentary establishes beyond doubt that the flesh of the human victim of the original Puruṣa-medha was partaken of by its pre-Aryan as well as Aryan performers, who were the whole tribe itself, congregated for celebrating this periodical Mahā-makham.

That the 184 human victims were not sacrificed, but let off, is clearly a later invention. If the sacrifice was verily a symbolic one, why should these prescribed human victims, of both sexes (not excluding eunuchs), drawn from every conceivable profession and description, should be actually bound to sacrificial posts and the whole ritual of slaughter – except the actual act itself – be gone through? History is not lacking in examples of similar bloody sacrifices. Had not Jarāsandha, the emperor of Magadha, been slain in a wrestling bout by Bhima, nobody could have prevented him from sacrificing the numerous kings he had imprisoned to the divine consort of Umā (II.14.64-68). The Tamil epic Silappadikaram describes a human sacrifice in which 1,000 goldsmiths were sacrificed:

1. From that day forth the Pāndyan kingdom was deprived of rains, and famine-stricken. This was followed by fever and plague. Verrivercceliyan reigning at Korkai propitiated the Lady of Chastity by sacrificing a thousand goldsmiths, and celebrated a festival when there was a downpour causing fertility to the land. Thereupon the kingdom was rid of disease and distress.[223]

Though the number is evidently exaggerated, the veracity of the ritual can hardly be questioned. If the orthodox try to attribute every conceivable virtue to the primitive Aryans, Marxists accepting Morgan indiscriminatingly supplement these efforts of the orthodox by defining primitive tribalism, including the Aryan one, as 'the golden age of humanity'. Chattopadhyaya tries to impose the same subjective notions on the early Vedic society:

The Vedic *rita*, in its aspect of the human relations, must have originally been what Engels called here the 'simple moral grandeur of the ancient gentile society'. . . .

It is well known that the conception of the *rita* gradually faded away from the consciousness of the Vedic poets. Along with this also declined the ancient glory of Varuna. The reason is obvious. Of all the Vedic gods, Varuna's relations with the *rita* had been the most intimate. 'With Varuna seems to have been bound up in the first instance the conception of *rita*. . .and with his lessening glory these conceptions (of the cosmic and moral order) fade from Indian thought'. . . .

. . .the early Vedic poets. . .knew him (Varuna) as the friend of friends, the protector and the benefactor, the showerer of desires. They knew him as the god with the greatest moral grandeur, the upholder of the *rita* – not the Varuna who had become a merciless monster with his uncanny demand: 'The penalty and forfeit of my bond.'[224]

Thus, he spares no efforts to convince us that Varuṇa was against any human sacrifice being offered to him, that he was the most sublime deity of the golden era of early Vedic society, and falls in line with all the scholars in attributing every evil of later Vedic society to the primal goddess of Indus society: Nirṛti:

A series of verses are said to have been composed by Sunahsepa bound to the sacrificial post. In these verses, he appealed to the ancient glory of the Vedic gods. One of these verses should interest us in particular:

'Keep us away from *nirriti* (the fall from the *rita*), deliver us from the sin that we have committed.

'It was a curse on the new order. . . . It was also an effort to revive the memory of the past. . . . The ancient glory of the *rita*. When the father, driven by hunger, sells the son like a chattel for a hundred cows; when, driven by greed, he proceeds to bind the son to the sacrificial post, when, further, maddened by the prospect of another hundred, he runs with the brandished sword to slaughter the son, – the son, with the heritage of the ancient *rita*, was naturally apprehensive of the new order under the new fdrce of *nirriti*.'[225]

Though a primitive tribe, prior to attaining the stage of communal

slavery, lived the life of primitive communism *internally*, limited to itself exclusively, it should not be forgotten that this 'moral grandeur' of primitive equality (which was not absolute as we have demonstrated) was conditioned by primitive tools which permitted it precarious and uncertain subsistence with the most dreaded death in every conceivable form dogging every moment of its existence. Ignorance and superstition impelled it to all sorts of resulting monstrosities, magical conceptions which filled the void of the backwardness of productive technology and led it to periodically sacrificing and eating its best members and indulging in the most indiscriminate cannibalism with regard to alien tribes. With the introduction of communal slavery, though the best member of the ruling tribe were henceforth saved from ritual slaughter, irregular cannibalism practised as a result of inter-tribal clashes and raids was supplemented by the most gory human sacrifices regularly inflicted on war captives and communal slaves. If Nirṛti represented the former monstrosities with the relieving aspect of primitive matriarchal 'moral grandeur,' Varuṇa represented the latter monstrosities with the relieving aspect of the matrilineal 'moral grandeur' of the enslaving tribe.

It is in this context also that Buddha repeatedly condemned the Brahminical sacrificial religion. Explaining his doctrines to Pessa (Sanskrit Preṣya = slave), the son of an elephant-rider, and Kandāraka, the wandering ascetic (paribbājaka), Buddha said:

> Monks, (In this world) there is a consecrated king or a great granaried Brahmin. He builds a mote-hall (santhāgāra) near the eastern gate of the city, and shaving his head, donning donkey-skin, smearing his body with butter and oil and scratching his back with a deer-horn, enters the mote-hall accompanied by his chief queen and Brahman purohita. He sleeps there on the bare ground coated with cow-dung.... He (the sacrificer king) says thus - 'So many bulls be slaughtered in the sacrifice, so many calves be slaughtered in the sacrifice, so many goats be slaughtered in the sacrifice, so many sheep be slaughtered in the sacrifice, so many trees be cut down for the sacrifice, so much grass be cut for (spreading on) the altar.' Those that are his slaves of the agrestic (Dasa) and household (presya) categories and those that are his servants, labour there chastised, frightened, tearful and weeping....'[226]

Though sacrifice of slaves was no more in vogue in Buddha's time, the 'ritual' torture inflicted on them harked back to those bygone days when they were actually slaughtered in hundreds. That is why Vidhura defined Dāsas as vadhya, fit to be sacrificially slaughtered. When he was brought before Varuṇa, the king of the Nāgas by the Yakṣa Puṇṇaka, he was accosted by the god as follows:

> It does no credit to your intelligence to be so dumb-founded by the fear of impending death as not to salute me.
>
> Vidhura retorted:
>
> 'I am not afraid of death, O Nāga? But he who is "vadhya" does not salute anybody, neither is he saluted by anybody.'[227]

Prior to communal slavery, Nirṛti's fatal bonds fastened only on those persons who were selected to be ritually sacrificed by the tribal mother herself, representing Nirṛti, the earth mother, for regenerating the tribe and nature. That is why Kālī, one of Nirṛti's forms, used to be dressed in red garments, and she appeared in that form to Aś-vatthaman when he massacred the whole of the Pāṇḍava war-camp at night (X.8.69). For red is the colour of death and regeneration. The sacrificial victim, being the human representative of the Sākṣin (witness) moon god, used to be dressed in red clothes and decked with garlands of red Karva-vīra flowers. With the advent of communal slavery, all Dāsas being potentially 'vadhya', their normal costume, however meagre it may have been, became red. Out of the eleven king makers or jewels who took part in the royal consecration, the Kṣattā, Go-vikartana, and Pālāgala were Śūdras or communal slaves. Though the dress of the first two is not known, we are told that Pālāgala wore red turban.[228] When the Pāṇḍavas served king Virāṭa of the Matsyas incognito for one year, it was as self-declared slaves; for when Draupadī, wearing a single and soiled garment as of a female slave, approached queen Sudeṣṇā for employment as a Sairandhrī, she told the queen that she wanted to serve her as a female slave of the Sairandhrī category (IV.10.17). Arjuna served as an eunuch and Sahadeva as the guardian of cows. Both of them wore red garments (IV.19.36: IV.38.31). According to Hari-vaṁśa (II.6), Nanda-gopa, the chief of the cow-herd slaves of the Yādavas, wore red clothes.

Yama, the priest king of the dead (Dharma-rāja) or manes (Pitṛ-rāja), appeared before Sāvitrī attired in red (III.297.8). His representatives on earth, the Caṇḍāla executioners, could dress only in clothes taken from dead bodies (mṛta-celam), and those clothes are still of red colour. They lived in cemeteries, and hence were called mṛta-pās. The Yakṣa Puṇṇaka, the divine communal slave, appeared in the dream of king Dhanañjaya as an executioner dressed in red, wearing red garlands and holding a sword in his hand.[229] The law-giver Baudhāyana directs that priests performing black magic (abhicāra) in sacrifices should wear red clothes.[230] Ascetics were also called parivrājakas. The word is derived from the root pari-vraj,

meaning to go out of the world, to die. The initiation of a person to monk-hood was called pabbajjā, which is also derived from the same root. Ascetics, excepting of course those belonging to naked sects, were dressed in red.

Nirṛti had already come to be transformed exclusively into a goddess of death. The Smṛtis identify outcastes and slaves with death (an outcaste in those days had no other alternative, practically and juridically, but to be a slave). Law-giver Gautama enjoins:

1. Let him cast off a father who assasinates a king, who sacrifices for Śūdras, who sacrifices for his own sake (accepting) money from Śūdras, who divulges the Veda (to persons not authorised to study it), who kills a learned Brāhmaṇa, who dwells with men of the lower castes or (cohabits) with a female of one of the lower castes.

2. Having assembled the (sinner's) spiritual Gurus and the relatives by marriage, (the sons and other kinsmen) shall perform (for him) all the funeral rites, the first of which is the libation of water.

3. And (afterwards) they shall overturn his water-vessel (in the following manner).

4. A slave or a hired servant shall fetch an impure vessel from a dust-heap, fill it (with water taken) from the pot of a female slave and, his face turned towards the south, upset it with his foot, pronouncing (the sinner's) name (and saying) 'I deprive N.N. of water.'

5. All (the kinsmen) shall touch him (the slave) passing their sacrificial cords over the right shoulder and under the left arm, and untying the locks on their heads.[231]

The 184 human victims of Puruṣa sacrifice could be released from the sacrificial posts to which they were tied and thus from the ritual slaughter, only by reciting the Atharva-vedic hymn VI.84* invoking Nirṛti.[232] This ritual means, that if only Nirṛti of all other deities could redeem these 184 victims and not the Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa to whom they were sacrificed, and as in the Aryan version of the Puruṣa sacrifice described by the Ṛg-vedic hymn X.90 the Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa himself was the sacrificial victim, it becomes clear beyond doubt that in the archetypal pre-Aryan Puruṣa sacrifice, the account of which is now lost to us, the Puruṣa was sacrificed to Nirṛti by her human representative: the tribal mother: rāṣṭrī-devi. *In primitive magic only the slayer could become the saviour!*

*Mm. Siddheshwarshatri Chitrav translates 'baddhānam' in the first Rk as 'disease ridden persons'. Nirṛti's special disease was called 'Kṣetriya' (see Pāṇini's rule V.2.92 and Atharva-veda II.8-10). This disease could be cured only in another Kṣetra or body, meaning in another birth. It means that she was Kṣetrasya Patih or Kṣatra.

In the pre-slavery matriarchal Indus society, death and life were united in the person of the ever-renewing tribal mother Nirṛti, and the contradiction between these two opposites of death and life was reconciled *internally* by periodically sacrificing the best males of the tribe as her kartā Brahman consorts. With the rise of communal slavery, the unity of death and life was sundered. The Asura Brahman priest-king, the Vasiṣṭha – son of Varuṇa, now concentrated in himself the 'effect' of death: 'life' and the means to it on behalf of the ruling tribe, while Nirṛti, who in the later period of matriarchy itself had become the mother goddess of the tribe, now came to be identified exclusively with the 'cause' of life: 'death' and with the communal slaves who were the 'means' of life. Kaṭa, her sacred field and shrine of death and life, now signified solely 'corpse', and hence the way to the Kaṭaṅ-kaṭi, Nirṛti, became the direction of death: Nairṛtya (South-west).[233] Her city is still known as Mohenjo-daro, the mound of the dead.[234] She, as Caṇḍālī Arundhati, gave her name and robes to the communal slaves who contemptuously came to be labelled Caṇḍālas. Not only these nir-avasita Śūdras, as later they came to be styled by the Brahminical society, but all the Śūdra communal slaves were now referred to by law-givers Āpastamba (I.3.9.9), Vasiṣṭha (18.13), and Yājñavalkya (I.148), and by the Mīmāṁsaka Śabara (on Jaimini, VI,1.88) as cemetery: śmaśāna. The communal slaves who tilled the temple lands were also called kināśas. The great grammarian-poet, Māgha, in his Śiśupāla-vadha (I.73), calls Yama, the priest king of the dead: Kināśa. The intensified conflict between life and death was now sought to be resolved *externally* by sacrificing the slave kartas as the periodical Brahmans. In the Puruṣa sacrifice a kināśa is offered to Ira, the earth goddess.

Though thus released from periodical death the Asura Brahman priest-king who had appropriated the priestly and regnal functions of the rāṣṭrī through dynastic incest and matrilineality, has no proper place belonging to him in the sacrifice. Silently he sits and superintends the performance by assenting aloud to every query of the other priests with the meaningless word 'Om'. Kauṣītaki Brahmana explains the function of the Brahman priest as follows:

VI.11. They say, 'since it is by the Ṛc that the Hotṛ becomes Hotṛ, by the Yajus that the Adhvaryu becomes Adhvaryu, by the Sāman that the Udgātṛ becomes Udgātṛ, by what does the Brahman become Brahman?' The sap of brilliance which he developed from the threefold lore, by that the Brahman becomes Brahman. . . .' They say, 'How much of the sacrifice does the

Brahman perform? and how much the other priests?' 'A half' should he reply. There are two tracks of the sacrifice; one is performed with speech, the other with the mind; that which is performed with speech, the other priests do; that which (is performed) with the mind, the Brahman does; therefore so long as they perform with Rc, the Yajus, the Sāman, so long should the Brahman sit, for he performs a half of the sacrifice.

Vi.12. When they say to him, 'O Brahman, shall we bring forward?' 'O Brahman, shall we proceed?' 'O Brahman, shall we set forth?' 'O Brahman, shall we praise?' he should instigate them with the word Om only; that one syllable is the counterpart for the threefold lore. . . .[235]

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa clarifies the function of the Brahman priest more specifically:

V.34 (XXV.9). They say, 'Seeing that the fees are brought for the Adhvaryu' (by the sacrificer thinking) 'He has drawn the cups for me, he has acted for me, he has offered the libations for me', for the Udgātṛ (thinking) 'He has sung for me,' for the Hotṛ (thinking) 'He has said the invitatory verses for me, he has recited (the litanies) for me, he has said the offering verses for me,' 'what has the Brahman priest done for the fees brought for him; or is it that without action he is to receive them?' The Brahman is the physician; he receives for making medicine for the sacrifice. Moreover, in that (the Brahman) performs his function as Brahman with the greatest amount of holy power, with the sap of the metres; therefore is he the Brahman; in the beginning the Brahman was the sharer of half with the other priests; a half (of the holy power) was the Brahman's, a half the other priests. . . .[236]

But with this sophistry the sacerdotalists could not carry conviction even to themselves, and hence Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa comes out with the plain truth:

16. Three gold pieces of a hundred mānas each are the sacrificial fee for this (offering). He presents them to the Brahman; for the Brahman neither performs (like the Adhvaryu), nor chants (like the Udgātṛ), nor recites (like the Hotṛ), and yet he is an object of respect. Therefore, he presents to the Brahman three gold pieces of a hundred mānas each.[237]

Significantly the Brahman priest is given three gold pieces, the same sacred number three of Nirṛti and Prakṛti. But why gold? Sāyaṇa comments:

. . .gold is not used for actual consumption, but only indirectly, as for vessels on which food is served, or in traffic, as a medium of barter; – the gold thus never losing its appearance, its glory.[238]

It has already been explained that one of the synonyms of hiraṇya (gold) is candra (moon), and that the sixteen multiples of the hiraṇya

Kārṣā-paṇa of the Indus state originated from the sixteen parts of his human representative, the Puruṣa Brahman. But, the Puruṣa Brahman was short-lived, while hiraṇya is imperishable; he was useful, while with it 'they do nothing'; only after his sacrificial death the universe was regenerated through his dismembered body, while it is only because of its undying glorious body (yaśo-rūpam) that it reflects the values of the universe of commodities. The Puruṣa Brahman attained to this 'imperishable', 'useless', and still 'glorious' state when he burgeoned into the Asura Brahman priest-king.

But, as a priest-king he still could not grow old in his sacred office; for otherwise the tribe and nature also would grow old and die. So he now made a magical mimicry of death by 'going out of the world'. Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā directs that after the performance of the Puruṣa sacrifice the sacrificer should recite the six Rks invoking the sun and go out in the forest not to return again to the human habitation.[239] This is the origin of the ascetic renunciation of the world (pra-vrajyā) and of the third stage of āśrama in human life prescribed to the twice-borns (dvijas) in Vedic times. The āśrama is called 'vānaprastha' which literally means to take to forest life giving up householder's life (gṛha-stha-āśrama). Menon states that similar custom was in vogue in Kerala:

. . .It is significant that, at one time, a custom arose of the Zamorin retiring for life to a pagoda and leading the life of a recluse, the second in succession acting as regent, who in his turn, had to retire when his time came. Similarly the Raja of Cochin followed the custom of retiring in old age to a temple and there leading a life in seclusion leaving the management of the state to the heir-apparent. . . .[240]

The first of the six Rks that the sacrificer of the Puruṣa sacrifice, the Asura priest-king, had to recite before taking to forest, is significant (XXXI.17):

The sun which rises day by day, being generated by the union of the five great elements (Vi-rāṭ) and viśva-karman the time embodied, was himself the dying Puruṣa. He it is that has attained supremacy among the gods.[241]

The dying Puruṣa Brahman, the human representative of the evanescent moon god, is imperceptibly transformed into the undying priest-king, the human representative of the eternal sun god. But, Asura priest-kingship rests basically on matrilineality and dynastic incest and hence he still remains the synthesis of the two deities: the Moon and the Sun. Brahmanhood, the manifestation of the lunar and male attribute, does not leave him as in Aryan royal consecration, but

by attaining to the solar attribute, is transmuted into 'trascendental Brahman-hood', thereby again identifying him with the hiraṇya money, which is the 'transcendental commodity'. Money in the Indus state is thus the economic reflex of the Asura Brahman priest-kingship. It is this transcendental Brahman that is now projected as the philosophical category: Brahma. The story of Satyakāma Jābāla, related by Chāndogya Upaniṣad, has already been alluded to in Chapter 10. After being accepted as a student of sacred knowledge by Haridrumata Gautama, Jābāla was assigned by his preceptor the task of tending his 400 kine and not to return till they increase to a thousand:

...he separated out four hundred lean, weak cows and said: 'Follow these, my dear.'

As he was driving them on, he said: 'I may not return without a thousand.' So he lived away a number of years. When they came to be a thousand, the bull spoke to him saying: 'Satyakāma!'

'Sir!' he replied.

'We have reached a thousand, my dear. Bring us to the teacher's house. And let me tell you a quarter (pāda) of Brahma.'

'Tell me, Sir.'

To him it then said: 'One sixteenth (kalā)* is the east. One sixteenth is the west. One sixteenth is the south. One sixteenth is the north. This, verily, my dear, is the quarter of Brahma, consisting of four sixteenths, named the Shining (prakāśavān).'

He who, knowing it thus, reverences a quarter of Brahma, consisting of four sixteenths, as the shining, becomes shining in this world....

'Fire will tell you a quarter.'

He then, when it was morrow, drove the cows on. Where they came at evening, there he built a fire, penned in the cows, laid on fuel, and sat down to the west of the fire, facing east.

The fire spoke to him, saying: 'Satyakāma!'

'Sir!' he replied.

'Let me tell you, my dear, a quarter of Brahma.'

'Tell me, Sir.'

To him it then said: 'One sixteenth is the earth. One sixteenth is the atmosphere. One sixteenth is the sky. One sixteenth is the ocean. This verily, my dear, is the quarter of Brahma, consisting of four sixteenths, named the Endless (anantavān).'

Next day in the evening a swan explained to him the third quarter of Brahma:

...'One sixteenth is fire. One sixteenth is the sun. One sixteenth is the moon. One sixteenth is lightning. This verily, my dear, is the quarter of Brahma, consisting of four sixteenths, named the Luminous (jyotiṣmān).'

*Digit of the moon.

On the fourth day in the evening, when his teacher's house was a day's journey ahead, a diver bird expounded to him the last quarter of Brahma:

...'One sixteenth is breath. One sixteenth is the eye. One sixteenth is the ear. One sixteenth is mind. This, verily, my dear, is the quarter of Brahma, consisting of four sixteenths, named possessing support (āyatanavān).'[242]

Like the sixteen digits of the moon god, like the sixteen avadānas (pieces) of the dismembered Puruṣa Brahman, and like the four and sixteen multiples of the hiraṇya Kārṣā-paṇa, the philosophical Brahma category of Satyakāma of the matrilineal Jābālis consisted of four pādas and sixteen kalās. As the money form of value is the sum total of the world of commodities, the Brahma of the Indus society, as expounded initially by its Asura priest-kings, was the sum total of the world of material phenomena, the eternal Brahma consisting of evanescent material things. This is how monist materialism made its first appearance in India.[242]

The dualism of the matriarchal Sāṅkhya could be sublated into monist materialism by the Asura priest-king only because he was neither the Vi-rāt Prakṛti, nor the Puruṣa. That is why the Rk XXXI.17 of Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, already quoted, says that the Puruṣa now is the offspring of Vi-rāt and Viśva-karman. He is now the Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa, the undying son of the dying man (Nara)!

But many had to die in order that one might live. Many slaves had to die in order that the Asura priest-king might live. The integral Puruṣa entity itself had to spilt up to make this possible. The dying half became identified with the Dāsa slaves and the undying half with the Asura priest-king. That is why the Dāsas also came to be known as 'puruṣas' and the Asura Puruṣa Brahman came to be styled as Divodāsa!

Societies that pass out of material existence persist in the form of religious sects and celestial or infernal societies. The Indus matrilineal slave society, defeated and enslaved by the patriarchal Aryans, was pushed, like the Asura priest-king Bali, down into the nether world. Amara-kośa has preserved the inverted reflection of this weird world. The Indus river of the underworld is called Vaitaraṇī (469). The underworld is called Nāga-loka, the world of the votaries of Earth Mother, for the Nāgas are said to be the progeny of Kadrū. The Nāga-loka is also called Bali-sadma (439), the abode of the Asura priest-king Bali. The mother goddess of hell is called Naraka-devī, alias Nirṛti (464). The master-tribe of Nāgas rules the slave tribe of the dead (preta) condemned to this purgatory. The Smṛtis term the

Śūdras as cemetery (śmaśāna)! This under-worldly slave-tribe has to live the life of ājū or viṣṭi. Viṣṭi has come to mean forced and unpaid labour of feudal times. But its original meaning has been preserved by Artha-śāstra (II.31) which defines it as 'Dāsa or slave labour'. The lexicon describes the life of ājū or viṣṭi as full of torment, intensive pain, torture, suffering, affliction, toil, sorrow and birth-pangs (464-467)!

References

1. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 59.
2. Ibid., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 66.
3. Kanakasabhai, V., *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 135.
4. Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, p. 163.
5. Kanakasabhai, V., *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.
6. *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, X.2-4.
7. Marx, K., *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations*, p. 87.
8. Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 761.
9. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 360.
10. Chanana, D.R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, pp. 96, 143.
11. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, P. I., pp. 180-181.
12. Fick, R., *The Social Organisation in North-east India in Buddha's Time*, p. 312.
13. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. II, pp. 91-93.
14. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 136; also pp. 92-95; 141-143.
17. Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Pāṇini*, pp. 99, 112-113.
18. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II, pp. 49-51.
19. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137.
20. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, pp. 559-566; Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pali*, 22.257. 1876-1913.
21. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, 22.547, 1965, 1969-1970.
22. *Ibid.*, 22.547. 1993-2001.
23. *Ibid.*, 22.547, 2006.
24. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 95, 141, 143.
26. Struve, V.V., *Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 25-26.
27. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 54.
28. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 42.
29. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II, p. 109; for Baudhāyana, *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 239.
30. Griffith, R., *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, Vol. I, p. 171.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
32. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 357.
33. Tyumenev, A.I., *Ancient Mesopotamia*, p. 124.
34. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 348-349.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.
38. Dange, S.A., *India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*, p. xii.
39. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 145.
42. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pali*, 22.547.1444.
43. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1445.
44. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 317.
45. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 275.
46. Kashyap, J. (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Mahāvagga-pāli*, I.30.88; VIII.4.7.
47. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 67.
48. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pali*, 22.546.1446.
49. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, p. 276.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-274.
53. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 98-99.
54. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.
55. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, 22.546.1471, 1536.
56. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1518, 1521.
57. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1551, 1562, 1580, 1636-1637, 1639.
58. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1509.
59. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1469.
60. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1516.
61. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1526.
62. *Ibid.*, 22.546.1466.
63. Joglekar, S.A., *Hāla Sātavāhanāci Gāthā Sapta-śati* (Marathi), p. 285.
64. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, p. 300.
65. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, 22.546.1347.
66. Chattopadhyaya, D., *Lokayata*, p. 335.
67. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.
68. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vol. XIX, pp. 492-493.
69. Kashyap, J., (ed), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Mahā-vagga*, VIII.2.10-11.
70. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 144.
71. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, pp. 497-499.
72. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 127.
73. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XX, pp. 224-226.
74. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. IV, pp. 345-353.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 349.
76. Sankrityayana, R. and Dharmarakshit, *Majjhima-nikāya* (Hindi trans.), p. 429.
77. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, p. 150.

D. C. P. R. I.

78. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.
79. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 79.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
81. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 329.
82. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 131.
83. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, p. 279.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
85. Basham, A.L., *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas*, p. 37.
86. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122.
87. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 429.
88. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 277.
89. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.
90. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 275-276.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
94. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 35.
95. *Rāmāyaṇa, Uttara-kāṇḍa*, 76.2-5.
96. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
97. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, pp. 189-191.
98. Kosambi, D.D., *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 93.
99. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, *Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, III.3.12.
100. *Ibid.*, III.3.13.
101. *Ibid.*, III.4.14, III.6.24.
102. Ruben, W., "Some Problems of the Ancient Indian Republics", in Kunwar Mohammad Asraf, pp. 11-12.
103. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 22.546.1388.
104. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, p. 311.
105. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, 22.546.1389.
106. *Ibid.*, *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Mahā-vagga*, VIII.2.10-11.
107. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI p. 303.
108. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, *Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, II.4.16-17.
109. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 512-513.
110. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 123.
111. Ehrenfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, p. 62.
112. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, p. 519.
113. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 37.
114. Puri, B.N. *India in the Times of Patañjali*, p. 74.
115. Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vol. I, p. 307.
116. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. II, p. 195.
117. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 155.
118. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Pārājika-pāli*, IV.4.47, IV.17.120, IV.27.185.
119. *Ibid.*, I.1.1-16.
120. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 382.
121. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.
122. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, p. 628.
123. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātakapāli*, 22.545.1208.

124. *Ibid.*, 22.547.2170.
125. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Pācittiya-pāli*, II.1.1; IV.17.1.
126. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
128. *Kāma-sūtra*, VI.6.50.
129. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. I, pp. 307-309; Fick, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 307-308.
130. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 91.
131. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli, Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, II.5.72; *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, I.39.1.15; Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 65.
132. Keith, A.B., *Rigveda Brāhamaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, p. 135.
133. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.
134. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 66-67.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
137. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
138. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, p. 279.
139. Garbe, R., "The Sāṁkhya Philosophy", unpublished Eng. trans., Wadekar, D.R., text, pp. 13-15.
140. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.
141. *Ibid.*
142. Fick, R., *op. cit.*, p. 320.
143. Kane, P.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71,
144. Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, p. 287.
145. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 65.
146. Keith, A.B., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vol. XIX, pp. 533-534.
147. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
148. Briffault, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 483-485.
149. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 91.
150. Patañjali on Pāṇini's rule V.2.46; Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, p. 248; Puri, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 130.
151. Puri, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 130.
152. Marx, K., *Capital*, Vol.I, pp. 48-70.
153. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, p. 248.
154. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. I, pp. 207-209; see also Suhanu Jātaka, *Ibid.*, Vol. II., pp. 196-198.
155. Keith, A.D., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vol. XVIII, p. 116; *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, III.49-50.
156. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, pp. 67-68.
157. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 122.
158. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 134, plates 57, 58.
159. Griffith, R., *op. cit.*, p. 497.
160. Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *Rg-veda* (Marathi trans.), p. 292.
161. Robertson Smith, W., *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 36-37.
162. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, p. 431.
163. Puri, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 10.
164. Keith, A.B., *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. XXV, p. 128.

165. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIII, p. 69.
166. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, *s.v.*
167. Kosambi, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 80.
168. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.
169. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Pārājika-pāli*, I.2.65.
170. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, p. 264.
171. *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, pp. 1-5.
172. Hume, R.E., *op. cit.*, p. 244.
173. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 410-411.
174. Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 148, 149, 168, 217.
175. Robertson Smith, W., *op. cit.*, p. 488.
176. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, p. 408.
177. Hume, R.E., *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218.
178. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 394-395.
179. *Mahābhārata*, XIII.51.6.
180. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 22.547.2324-2325; Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 74.
181. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. III, p. 33.
182. Fick, R., *op. cit.*, p. 308.
183. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 74.
184. Maity, S.K., *The Economic Life of Northern India in the Gupta Period*, p. 171.
185. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, p. 278.
186. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
188. *Mahābhārata*, I.105.27.
189. Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, pp. 91-92.
190. Nilakanta Shastri, K.A., "A Note on Administrative Statistics in Ancient India" in Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf, pp. 3-4.
191. Agrawala, V.S., *op. cit.*, p. 226.
192. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.
193. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
194. Thomson, G., *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. II, pp. 188-189.
195. *Arthaśāstra*, trans. Shamasastry, R., p. 143.
196. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
197. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
198. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 69.
199. Jayaswal, K.P., *Hindu Polity*, p. 96.
200. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Vinaya-piṭaka, Pācittiya-pāli*, V.33.221.
201. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 326.
202. *Ibid.*
203. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VI.1.6.
204. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. V, p. 575.
205. Jain, J.C., *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 107.
206. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, II.1.3.
207. *Nārada*, Vyav. V.25.
208. Chanana, D.R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, pp. 91, 139.
209. Jain, J.C., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

210. *Ibid.*
211. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *op. cit.*, *Mahāvagga-pāli*, II.1.3.
212. Jain, J.C., *op. cit.*, p. 107.
213. Chanana, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 91.
214. Thomson, G., *Aeschulus and Athens*, p. 149.
215. *Mahābhārata*, II.33.10.
216. Fick, R., *op. cit.*, p. 310.
217. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Khuddaka-nikāya, Thera-gāthā-pāli*, 16.1.775.
218. *Śatapatha Brāhmana*, III.3.1.
219. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Jātaka-pāli*, 22.546.1525.
220. *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXX.5-22; *Śatapatha Brāhmana*, *XIII.6.2.3-11*; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 407-410, 413-417.
221. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 410-411.
222. *Ibid.*
223. Dikshitar, V.R.R., *Silappadikaram*, p. 81.
224. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 632, 633, 637.
225. *Ibid.*, p. 639.
226. Kashyap, J., (ed.), *Majjhima-nikāya-pāli*, II.2.4.9, II.44.1.6; *Dīgha-nikāya-pāli*, *Sīlak-khandha-vagga*, V.3.23.
227. *Ibid.*, *Jātaka-pali*, 22.546.1584-1585.
228. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 64.
229. *Jātaka* (Hindi), Vol. VI, p. 365.
230. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, p. 187.
231. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 274-275; for Vasiṣtha, *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 77.
232. Whitney, W.D., *op. cit.*, pp. 343-344.
233. *Mahābhārata*, II.80.22.
234. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. and Srinivasachari, G., *Advanced History of India.*, p. 20.
235. Keith, A.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 379-380.
236. *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258.
237. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 141.
238. *Ibid.*
239. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Marathi trans.), pp. 487-491.
240. Menon, P., *op. cit.*, p. 399.
241. Pathak, Shridharshastri, *op. cit.*, p. 490.
242. Chattopadhyaya, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 43-46.

Bibliography

A

Abhyankar, Vasudevshastri, *Vyākaraṇa-mahābhāṣya* (text with Marathi trans.), Parts I-VI, Poona, 1938-1951.

(*Śrī*) *Ācārāṅga Sūtram* (Text with Hindi trans.), Amolakarishi, Dhulai, 1960.

Adhya, G.L., *Early Indian Economics*, APH, 1966.

Agarwala, V.S., *Indian as Known to Pāṇini*, University of Lucknow, 1953.

Aitareya-brāhmaṇa, ed. Gore, K., Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1925.

Itihāsika Patra Saṁgraha (Marathi).

Altekar, A.S., *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation*, Benares, 1938.

Amara-koṣa, ed., *Nārāyaṇ Rām Āchārya 'Kavyatīrtha'*, Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1950.

Ambedkar, B.R., *Who were the Shudras?* Thackers, 1970.

An Outline of Social Development, Part I, Moscow.

Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Vols. I-III, PP, Poona, 1957.

(Kautilya's) *Arthaśāstra*, trans. Shamasastry, Mysore, 1929.

(*The*) *Arthaśāstra of Kautilya* (Text with Hindi trans.), Gairola, V., CVB, Varanasi, 1962.

Atharva veda saṁhitā, ed. Satvalekar, S.D., Pardi, 1957.

B

Basham, A.L., *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas*, London, 1951; *The Wonder that was India*, New York, 1954.

Bernal, J.D., *Science in History*, London, 1954.

Bhadkamkar, H.M., *The Nirukta of Yāska* (with Nighaṇṭu), Vol. I, BORI, 1918.

Bhadkamkar, R.G., *The Nirukta of Yāska* (with Nighaṇṭu), Vol. II, BORI, 1942.

Bhāgavata-purāṇa (Text with Hindi trans.), Vols. I-II, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

Bongard-Levin, G., 'Megasthenes' "Indica" and the Inscriptions of Asoka, *Indian Studies: Past and Present*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1961.

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, (Text with Hindi trans.), Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

Briffault, R., *The Mothers*, Vols. I-III, London, 1927.

Brown, P., *Indian Architecture*, Bombay, Second Edition.

Buddha carita by Aśvaghoṣa, (Text with Hindi trans.), Chaudhari, S., Kathautiya, 1955.

C

Chanana, D.R. *Rg-bhāṣya. Saṅgraha*, Delhi, 1961; *Slavery in Ancient India*, PPH, 1960; 'The Sanskritist and Indian Society', in *Enquiry*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1965.
Chāndogyopaniṣad (Text with Hindi trans.), Gita Press, Gorakhpur.
Chattopadhyaya, D., 'An Introductory Note on Indian Idealism', in *Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf*, PPH, 1969. *Indian Atheism*, Calcutta, 1969; Indian Materialism – a Retrospect', in *Das Kapital Centenary Volume*, PPH, 1968; *Indian Philosophy*, PPH, 1964; Lokayata, PPH, 1964.
Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, *Ṛgvedāce Marāṭhī Bhāṣāntara* (Marathi), Poona, 1969.
Colebrooke, H.T., *The Sāṁkhya Kārikā*, Calcutta, 1887.
Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, A.O.S., Vol. 22, New Haven, Connecticut, 1942

D

Dange, S.A., *India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*, PPH, 1961.
Danielou, A., 'Silappadikaram' (trans.), *Illustrated Weekly*, 27-9-1964 to 7-2-1965.
Dasgupta, S.N., *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vols. I-V, Cambridge, 1963.
Desai, R., *Śrīmān Yogī* (Marathi), Vols. I-II, Bombay.
Dharmarakshit and Kashyap, K., *Saṁyutta-nikāya* (Hindi), Benares, 1954.
_____ and Sankrityayana, R., *Majjhima-nikāya* (Hindi), Benares, 1964.
Diakonoff, I.M., in *Ancient Mesopotamia*, Moscow, 1969.
Dikshitar, V.R.R., *The Silappadikāram* (trans.), Oxford, 1939.
Dutta, R.D., *India Today*, PPH, 1947.

E

Edwards, C., *The Hammurabi Code*, London, 1904.
Ehrenfels, O.R., *Mother-right in India*, Oxford, 1941.
Engels, F., *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Moscow, 1968.
Engineer, A., *Islam-Muslims-India*, Lok Vangmaya Griha (Pvt.) Ltd., Bombay, 1975.

F

Fick, R., *The Social Organisation in North-east India in Buddha's Time*, University of Calcutta, 1920.
Frazer, J.G., The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings, Vols. I-II, London, 1913; *The Dying God*, London, 1914; *Adonis Altis Osiris*, Vols. I-II, London, 1914; *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, Vols. I-II, London, 1914; *The Scapegoat*, London, 1913; *Balder the Beautiful*, Vols. I-II, London, 1913.

G

Gandharva, K., *Mālavā kī Loka-dhune* (Hindi), Bombay.
Garbe, R., *The Philosophy of Ancient India*, London, 1897; *The Sāṁkhya Philosophy*, unpublished trans. by Wadekar, D.R.
Griffith, R., *The Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, Vols. I-II, CSS, Varanasi, 1963.
Gurdon, P.R.T., *The Khasis*, London, 1914.

H

Habib, Irfan, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, APH, 1963.
Habib, Mohammad, *Politics and Society During the Early Medieval Period*, Vol. I, PPH, New Delhi, 1974.
Harṣa-carita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa (Text with Hindi trans.), Pathak, J., (SS, Varanasi, 1964).
Hiriyanna, M., *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London, 1964.
History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western, ed. Radhakrishnan, Vols. I-II, London, 1957.
Hitti, P.K., *History of the Arabs*, London, 1953.
Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, Oxford, 1965.

I

Iśādi Nau Upaniṣad (Text with Hindi trans.), Goenka, H., Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

J

Jain, H., *Bhāratīya Saṁskṛti me Jaina Dharma kā Yoga-dāna* (Hindi), Bhopal, 1962.
Jain, J.C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, Bombay, 1947.
Jain, P.C., *Labour in Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1971.
Jātaka (Hindi), Kausalyayana, A., Vols. I-VI. Prayag, 1941-1956.
(The) Jātaka, trans. Cowell, E.B. and Rouse, H.D., Vols. I-VI, Cambridge, 1895-1907.
Jayaswal, K.P., *Hindu Polity*, Bangalore, 1943.
Jha, G., *Ślokavārtika* (trans.), M.S. University, Baroda; *Shabara-bhāṣya* (trans.), Vols. I-III, OI, Baroda, 1933; *The Prabhākara School of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā*, Allahabad, 1911; *The Tattva-Kaumudī*, Poona, 1965.
Joglekar, S.A., *Hāla Sātavāhanāchī Gāthā Sapta-śatī* (Marathi), PP, Poona.

K

Kādambarī of Bāṇabhaṭṭa (Text with Hindi trans.), Pandit

Shrikrishnamohanshastri, CSS, Varanasi, 1961.
(Śrī) Kalpa-sūtram of Bhadrabāhu, Sanskrit commentary by Samayasundara Ganin, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1939.
Kāmasūtram of Vātsyāyana (Text with Hindi trans.), Devadatta Shastri, CSS, Varanasi, 1964.
Kanakasabhai, V., *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, Madras, 1956.
Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstras*, Vol. I – 1930, Vol. II, Part-I – 1941, BORI, Poona.
Karve, Irawati, *Kinship Organisation in India*, APH, 1968.
Kashyap, J., *Nālandā-Devanāgarī Pāli Series*, Pāli Publications Board, Bihar Government.
_____ and Dharmarakshit, *Saṁyutta-nikāya* (Hindi), Benares, 1954.
_____ and Sankrityayana, R., *Dīgha-nikāya* (Hindi), Benares, 1936.
Kāśikā, ed. Pandit Shrishobhitmishra, CSS, Benares, 1952.
Kausalyayana, A., *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (Hindi), Parts I-III, Mahabodhi Sabha, Calcutta, 1957-1966.
Keith, A.B., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Oxford, 1947; *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas*, H.O.S., Vol. 25, 1920; *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, H.O.S., Vol. 31, Oxford, 1925; *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, H.O.S., Vols. 18-19, 1914.
Kelkar, N.C., *Lokamānya Tilak Yāmce Caritra* (Marathi), Poona, 1923.
Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956; *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, 1962; *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, London, 1965.
Kunte, M.M., *The Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization*, 1880.

L

Luknitsky, P., *Nisso*, Moscow, 1949.

M

Macdonell, A.A., *History of Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1905.
Mahābhārata with Harivaṁśa, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.
Maity, S.K., *The Economy of Northern India in the Gupta Period*, Calcutta, 1957.
Mālatī-Mādhavam of Bhavabhūti (Text with Hindi trans.), Shrisheshrajsharma Shastri, CSS, Benares, 1954.
Mālavikā-Agnimitram of Kālidāsa (Text with Hindi trans.), Mishra, R., CSS, Varanasi, 1965.
Manusmṛti (Text with Hindi trans.), Hargovindshastri, CSS, Varanasi, 1965.
Marx, K., *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1954; *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, London, 1964.
Menon, P., *History of Kerala*, Vol. I-1924, Vol. II-1929, Ernakulam.
Morgan, L.H., *Ancient Society*, Bharati Library, Calcutta.
Mrechakaṭikam of Śūdraka (Text with Hindi trans.), Goswami, M., and Dwivedi, R., CSS, Varanasi, 1962.

N

Naiṣadha-mahākāvyam by Harṣa (Text with Hindi trans.), Vols. I-II, Pandit Hargovindshastri, CSS, Benares, 1954.
Namboodiripad, E.M.S., *Kerala : Yesterday, To-day and Tomorrow*, NBA, Calcutta, 1968.
Needham, J., *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vols. I-II, Cambridge, 1954.
Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., A History of South India, Oxford, 1958; 'A Note on Administrative Statistics in Ancient India,' in Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf, PPH, 1969.
Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. and Srinivasachari, G., *Advanced History of India*, AP., 1970.
Nyāya Philosophy, trans. Chattopadhyaya, D., and Gangopadhyaya, M., Parts I-III, Calcutta, 1967-1968.

O

Oza, G., *Rājapūtāne kā Itihāsa* (Hindi), Vols. I-II, Ajmer.
Oldenberg, H., *Buddha: His Life, His Teachings, His Order*, Calcutta, 1927.

P

Parikh, R., *Kāvyānuśāsana by Ācārya Hemachandra*, Vol. II, Part I, Bombay, 1938.
Pathak, Shridharshastri, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (Text with Marathi trans.), Poona, 1942.
Patwardhan, R.V., *Rgvedāce Suramya Marāthī Bhāṣāntara* (Text with Marathi trans.), Vols. I-III, Bombay, 1942.
Pavlov, V., *The Indian Capitalist Class*, PPH, 1964.
Pratijñā-nāṭakam of Bhāsa (Text with Hindi trans.), Mishra, R., CSS, Varanasi, 1966.
Przyluski, J., 'The Udumbaras', in *Indian Studies : Past and Present*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1960; 'The Sālvas', in *Indian Studies : Past and Present*, Vol. II, No. 1, 1960.
Puri, B.N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, Delhi.

R

Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vols. I-II, London, 1962.
Raghuvaṁśa-mahākāvyam of Kālidāsa (Text with Hindi trans.), Shrihargovind Misra, CSS, Varanasi, 1961.
Rāmāyaṇa (Text with Marathi trans.), Satvalekar, S.D., Parts 1-9, Pardi, 1941-1958.
Ranade, M.G., *Essays on Indian Economics*, Madras, 1920.
_____ and Telang, K.T., *Rise of Maratha Power and Other Essays*, University of Bombay, 1961.

Ray, P.C., *The Mahābhārata* (trans.), Calcutta, 1883-1895.
Rhys-Davids, T.W., *Buddhist India*, Calcutta, 1955; *Dialogues of the Buddha*, London, Vol. I, 1899; Vol. II, 1956; Vol. III, 1921.
Ruben, W., 'Some Problems of the Ancient Indian Repubics', in *Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf*, PPH, 1969; *Studies in Ancient Indian Thought*, Calcutta, 1966.

S

Sāṁkhya-kārikā (Text with Hindi trans.), CSS, Benares, 1953.
Sankrityayana, R., 'Ācārya Dīpankara Śrijñāna', in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, The Publications Division, GOI, 1956; *Buddha-caryyā* (Hindi), Benares, 1952; *Darśana-digdarśana* (Hindi), Allahabad, 1947; *Madhya-deśa* (Hindi).
_____ and Dharmarakshit, *Majjhima-nikāya* (Hindi), Benares, 1964.
_____ and Kashyap, J., *Dīgha-nikāya* (Hindi), Benares, 1936.
Sarkar, J., *Shivaji and His Times*, 1948.
Sarup, L., *Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1967.
Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha (Text with Hindi trans.), Sharma, U.S., CSS, Varanasi, 1964.
Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, Kalyana, Bombay, 1940.
_____, ed. Weber, A., CSS, Benares.
Sathe, A., *Fakirā* (Marathi), Bombay, 1959.
Sathe, M.D., *Vyākaraṇa-Siddhānta-Kaumudi* (Text with Marathi trans.), Parts I-V, Poona, 1965-1970.
Saundara-Nanda Kāvya of Aśvaghoṣa (Text with Hindi trans.), Choudhari, S., Kathautiya, 1959.
Sharma, R.B., *Bhāṣā aura Samāja* (Hindi), PPH, 1961; 'Feudalism, Varna, Caste and Nationality', in *Marxist Miscellany*, PPH, 1970.
Sharma, R.S., *Indian Feudalism: C. 300-1200*, Calcutta, 1965; *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, Bombay, 1966.
Shastri, DlN., *Critique of Indian Realism*, Agra University, 1964.
Seal, B.N., *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1958.
Seven Famous Greek Plays, trans. Oates, W.J. and O'Neill, E., New York, 1950.
Śiśupāla-vadham of Māghā (Text with Hindi trans.), Pandit Hargovind Shastri, CSS, Varanasi, 1961.
Smith, W.R., *Religion of the Semites*, London, 1907.
Steherbarsky, Th., *The Central Conception of Buddhism*, London, 1923; *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, Leningrad, 1927.
Struve, V.V., in *Ancient Mesopotamia*, Moscow, 1969.
(Śrī) Sūtra-Kṛtāṅgam with commentary by Śilāṅka, ed. Oza, A., Vols. I-II, Rajkot.

T

Taittirīya-saṁhitā, ed. Satvalekar, S.D., Pardi, 1957.

Thapar, Romila, *The Past and Prejudice*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1975.
The Sacred Books of the East, ed. Max Müller, Oxford; reprinted Motilal Banarsidass, 1964.
The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles.
Thompson, C.R., *The Epic of Gilgamish*, London, 1928.
Thomson, G., *Aschylus and Athens*, London, 1966; *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I – 1949, Vol. II – 1955, London.
Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vols. I-VII, Madras, 1909.
Tilak, B.G., *Śrīmad-bhagavadgītārahasya athavā Karmayogaśāstra* (Marathi), Poona, 1963.
Tyumenev, A.I., in *Ancient Mesopotamia*, Moscow, 1969.

U

Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra (Text with Hindi trans.), Doshi, R., Sailana.
Uttara-Rāma-Carita of Bhavabhūti, ed. trans. Karmarkar, R.D., Poona, 1954.

V

Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, ed. Amritlal Shastri, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1950.
Vedic Index, Macdonell, A.A., and Keith, A.B., Vols. I-II, Motilal Banarsidass, 1947.

W

Whitney, W.D., *Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, Vols. I-II, Motilal Banarsidass, 1962.
Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I – 1927, Vol. II – 1933, University of Calcutta.

Index

Addhimutta thera, 311
Abhrâtâ, 65
Aditi, 41, 72
Adityas, 23, 24
Agastya, 153
Age of Consent Bill, 2
Agrawala, V.S., 27, 35, 37, 73, 273, 284, 291
Agrestic slaves, 85, 245, 248-9, 260
Agricultural magic, 38
Agriculture, 52-69, 153, 211, 214-15, 238
  Deities, 38-9
  Festivals, 166
  Labour, 252-5
  Slave employment, 165, 253-7
  Systems, 97-8
  Women's province, 97
Ahalyā, 156-7, 189
Ailusā tribe, 213
Ajātasattu, 42, 44, 45, 55, 218, 221
Ājīvakas, 218
Akshamālā, 177, 178
Algonkin (American tribe), 214
al-Qutāmi, 102
Altekar, A.S., 38
Alūnā ritual, 199
Āmāya Dāsa, 306-7
Amba-pāli (gaṇika), 41, 43, 44-6
Ambaṭṭha, 267-8
Amba-vana, 189
Ambedkar, B.R., 3-4
Ambhi, King, 121
Ambhis, 121-2, 126
American tribe, 25, 27, 56, 192, 198, 214
Ammān, 148-9
Anas, 234-5
Ancient calendar, 99
Andhaka phratry, 25
Angirasa, 8
Animal sacrifice, 199-200
Anuruddha, Monk, 256-7
Āpastamba, 128
Āpri deities, 90
Apsarās, 52, 87, 121-2
Arabs
  Circumcision, 66
  Jahiliyah period, 102-3, 104
  Queens, 103
  Sexual freedom, 79
Aristotle, 84, 252
Arjuna, 26, 118, 283, 288
Ārsa marriage, 271
Arundhati, 177
Aṣṭā-pāda, 62-3
Astarte, Goddess, 198
Asura-priest kingship, 211-37
Asuras, 201-3, 220-1
Aśva-ghoṣa, 177
Aśvatthāman, 315
Athenian society
  Slavery, 9-10
Ayurveda, 252

Baber, Collector, 252, 263
Bāhlika, 100
Bakā, Demon, 101
Bali (Asur emperor), 61-2, 321
Bali-pratipadā, 60-2, 205
Bali sacrifice, 194
Baṇa, 77, 88
Bandhaki, 275
Baronga tribe, 96-7
Barter system, 283-6, 288, 289
Basham, A.L., 108, 109, 261
Baudhayana, 127
Berber tribe (Africa), 103-4
Bhaddiya (Sākya king), 8
Bhadrā Kakṣivatī, 41
Bhairavīs, 137, 138
Bhakti movement, 185
Bhaṇḍa-āgārika, 304
Bharata, King, 232
Bhārata war, 25, 116
Bhataka, 241
Bhatta-uddesaka, 301
Bhaṭṭoji, 39, 216
Bhil tribe, 219
Bhima, 26, 160, 259, 277
Bhisma, 23, 157-8, 232
Bhoja phratry, 25
Bhujyu Lāhyāyani, 214
Bodhas, 213
Brahma-datta, King, 74, 145, 189, 284
Brahman, 142-71, 186
  Priestly functions, 317-19
  Purchase for sacrifice, 294
Bride-price, 271
Briffault, R., 38, 78, 103, 151, 214, 224, 271, 283
Brother-sister marriage, 226-8, 229
Buddhist nun, 40, 46, 48
Buddhist sangha
  Administration, 53-7
Buhler, George, 37

Caitya sacrifice, 194
Caityas, 242-3
Calendar, 99
Canara
  Slavery, 7
Cāṇḍāla, 177, 281-2
Capital punishment, 189-91
Cārudatta, 77, 191
Cattle branding, 298-300
Ceḍaga, 46
Ceṭa (male slave), 241-2, 251
Chanana, Dev Raj, 12, 44, 153, 241, 242, 246, 247, 262, 265, 270, 271, 294
Chattopadhyaya, D., 21, 24, 38, 73, 83, 138, 201, 313
Cherōṭṭi Amma, 115
Child marriage, 2
China
  Slavery, 10-11
Chitrav, Siddheshwarshastri, 73, 139, 198, 288
Circumcision, 66
Citraratha, 283
Clan mother, 33-51
Clans, 18-20, 25, 33, 273
  Definition, 22-3
  Headship, 19
Cochin kingdom, 107-8, 152
Coinage, 290-2
Cole, M., 126
Commodity production, 6, 7-8
Communal slavery, 253-7, 269, 273-4, 294, 311, 314-15, 317
Conner, Lt., 277
Coomaraswamy, A.K., 95, 132, 145
Cross-cousin marriages, 35
Cross-roads, 77, 190
Cyavana Bhargava, 154, 294

Dākshas, 41
Dākṣikūla, 36
Daṇḍa dāsa, 308
Dange, S.A., 5, 8, 11, 155, 246
Dāsa slavery, 238-327
Dāsa tribe, 4, 80-1
Dasarā festival, 198-9
Daśaratha, King, 226
  Horse sacrifice, 179, 184-5
Dasgupta, S.N., 137
'Dāsyāh putrah' abuse, 212-13
Dasyus, 212-13, 218
Davids, Rhys, 40, 45, 58, 59, 84
Dead rites, 191-3
Deva
  Etymology, 99
Deva-dasi, 242-3, 251
Deva tribe, 254
Devamātṛka agriculture, 97-8
Devara, 99-100, 187
Devi
  Meaning, 99
Devinī, 99
Dhanañjaya, King, 248, 251
Dharma
  Definition, 82

Dharmarakshita, 40, 216
Dhaumya (Brahman), 30
Diakonoff, I.M., 215
Dice, 52-69, 115, 167, 205, 216
Dice board, 62-3, 97, 99, 216
Dighāvu, Prince, 189
Dikshitar, V.R. Ramchandra, 176
Diodorus, 308
Dipâ-avali festival, 205
Divāli festival, 219
Divine marriage, 75
Divodāsa, 231-3, 238, 321
Draupadi, 67, 116-17, 119, 129, 157, 259, 277, 283-4, 308
  Marriage festival, 174
  Sons' paternity, 130-1
Droṇa, 26
Drought oxen, 300
Durvāsas, 154, 160
Duryodhana, 26, 138, 298
Dusyanta, King, 232
Dynastic incest, 226-8

Earth mother, 70-94, 116
Eggeling, 181
Egypt
  Matriarchy, 104
  Queens, 105
  Slavery, 10
Ehrenfels, O.R., 44, 155
Elayaḍa Swarûpam, 115
Endogamy, 257
Exogamy, 18

Fate, 162-3
Father-daughter incest, 227-8
Female circumcision, 66
Female slaves, 248, 264, 274-5
  Proper names, 265-6
Festivals, 172-8
Feudalism, 5, 11, 43, 246-7
Fic, R., 153
Folk dramas, 197
Food distribution, 57-8
Four-varna system, 8, 266-7, 280
Fraternal polyandry, 129-30, 131
Frazer, J.G., 40, 96, 97, 197, 227, 228
Funeral ceremonies, 192-4

Gamblers, 52-3
Gambling days, 60-1
Gana, 23-5
Gaṇa-patyas, 24
Gāndharva marriage, 127, 134-5, 137
Gāndharva tribe, 254
Gaṅgā-Śantanu marriage, 159-60
Gani, Samayasundara, 71
Gaṇikas, 41-6, 48-9, 52, 83, 100
Gartāruk, 65-6
Gautama, 128
Gifts exchange, 283
Gods' wives, 98, 121
Gosāla, 218
Gotras, 18-19, 23, 33-4
  Marriage rites impact, 34-5
  Matrilineal system, 35-6
  Seven sages, 31
Graeme, Commissioner, 263
Greece
  Slaves, 8, 9-10
Griffith, R., 244
Group marriages, 80, 128, 129
Gujarat
  Commodity production, 7-8
  Slavery, 8
Gurdon, P.R.T., 101

Habib, Ifran, 6, 7
Hariścandra Aikṣvāka, 230
Heart sacrifice, 252
Hemacandra, 177
Hidimbā, Demoness, 101, 160
Holcyas, 260
Homosexual marriages, 146
Horde, 17-18
Horn-headedness, 198
Horse sacrifice, 83, 84-5, 144, 167, 178, 179, 180-5, 203
Household slavery, 165
Hudson, T.C., 162
Human flesh, 312
Human sacrifice, 196, 200-1, 207, 211, 294, 311-14, 316-17, 319-20
Hunters, 214

Idols, 288-9
Ila, 34, 99, 223

Ilā, Queen, 100, 154
  Horse sacrifice, 182
Ilanko-Atikal, 111
Illegitimate children, 279
Indian National Congress, 3
Indra, Festival of, 175-6, 177
Indra-Dāsas fight, 234-5
Indus civilization, 8, 27-8, 89, 211-37, 238, 254
Indus coinage, 292
Indus seals, 222
Initiation, 66-7, 258, 259
Inter-clan marriages, 272
Irina, 59-60, 70-1
Iroquois (American tribe), 56, 214
Irrigation, 97-8
Isis, Goddess, 198
Itti tribe (Egypt), 197
Iyer, Anantha Krishna, 241, 278

Jabal, Satyakama, 213-14, 320
Jain, J.C., 174
Jaina monks, 45-6
Jamadagni, 143
Jana, 19-20
Janaka, 155-6, 188, 255, 272
Jana-pada, 40
Janapada-kalyanis, 40, 83, 100
Jati, 20, 272
Jayaddisa, King, 114
Jayanta, 177
Jayaswal, K.P., 128
Jenmam slaves, 250
Jñāti, 20-1, 272
Jñāti-dāsi, 270-2, 273-4
Joint family, 23, 43, 106, 128, 148, 273

Kâaba black stone, 87-8
Kadrū-Suparṇi story, 18, 27-8, 73, 88-9, 253-4, 282-3
Kaikeyi, Queen, 131
Kalhana, 100
Kāli (Dāsa princess), 80, 83
Kanakasabhai, 111, 118, 239
Kane, P.V., 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 126, 128, 129, 161, 259, 280
Kaṇha, Sage, 143-4
Kannaki, Goddess, 111
Kaṇwas, 220
Kapila-vastu
  Origin, 62
Karanaver, 7, 148-9, 163-4
Karikal, King, 118
Karinâpill Kingdom, 115
Karṇa, 26, 110, 212, 241, 279, 283, 288
Kartā, 164-7
Kārṭṭikapilli Kingdom, 115
Karve, Irawati, 7, 33, 62, 101, 106, 107, 126, 130, 149, 151
Kashyap, Jagadish, 40
Kāśika, 21, 28, 39, 40
Kaśyapa, 8, 18
Kata land, 215-17, 240
Katāhaka (slave), 240-1, 311
Kātyāyana, 25
Kauravas, 25, 26, 29, 117-18, 119
Kautalya, 39, 53, 138, 243, 247, 252, 306
Kavaṣa Ailūsa, 211-12, 213
Kāyamkulam Kingdom, 115
Keith, A.B., 60, 72, 90, 181, 276
Kelkar, N.C., 2
Kerala
  Abominable custom, 79-80
  Agrestic slaves, 85
  Ancient history, 112
  Brahman government, 114-15, 179
  Cultivation, 114-15
  Festivals, 172-4
  Matriarchy, 7, 106, 163-4
  Nayars, 44, 89, 107, 144, 148, 152
  Non-Brahmin movement, 3
  Original tribes, 26-7
  Slavery, 7, 12, 248-50, 260-3
  Social system, 7-8
Khasha tribe, 107
Khasi tribe, 68, 101, 128, 164
Khattiyas, 26, 255-6
Khond tribe, 196
Khot landlordism, 2
Khyrim state, 101
Kicakas clan, 272
Kikatas, 215, 218
Kināśas, 245
King

Consecration, 95-6, 143
Kingship
Female origin, 95-108
Patrilineal, 223
Succession rule, 106-9
Kira-patika, 301-2
Kiṭā-giri state, 219-20
'Kitava' abuse, 213
Kojāgiri Paurṇima, 60
Koliyas, 255
Kosambi, D.D., 6, 7, 43, 53, 65, 71, 72, 82, 97, 98, 105, 142, 174, 204, 220, 232, 233, 234, 235, 244, 245, 247, 266, 290
Krita Dāsa, 307-8
Kṛṣṇa, 25, 254-5, 282
Kṛṣṇa/Indra struggle, 175-6
Kṛtavarman, Bhoja, 25
Kṣatra phratry, 41
Kṣattā (priest), 167-8
Kṣatriya women
Marriage with Brahman, 151-4
Kṣatriyas, 1, 8
Gotras, 33-4
Kukura phratry, 25
Kula, 18-19, 30, 33, 36-7, 128
Headship, 39-40
Kula land, 37-8, 58-9
Kula-pa, 19, 39-40, 100
Kula trees, 74
Kulaṭā, 39-40, 43, 52, 100
Kul-māsa, 38
Kumbha-dāsīs, 274-5
Kunte, M.M., 96
Kunti, 67-8, 78, 79, 83, 100, 117, 154, 160, 168, 279, 282, 285, 298
Kūpakas, 114, 115
Kuru tribe, 23, 26, 29, 30, 100, 217-18
Kusa, King, 221
Kusidins, 36, 220, 222

Land deed
Transfer with slaves, 295-6
Land division, 57-9, 63-4
Landownership, 109
Land revenue
Collection, 6-7
Land tax, 110
Licchavis, 8, 41, 42, 44
Loma-pāda, King, 145
Lopāmudra, Princess, 153
Love, 185-6
Lunar year, 179
Lyall, Charles, 101

Madanikā, 49
Mādhavi, 46, 48, 176-7
Mādra Aśvapati, 120
Mādra tribe, 41, 120, 182, 221-2
Magandis, 121-2, 217-18
Magic, 83
Mahāvira, 46, 47-8, 71, 188, 266
Māhisakas, 200
Mahiṣasura, 198-9, 204-5
Makhadeva, 189
Makkhali Gosāla, 218, 261
Malayalis, 113, 164
Mallaki tribe, 41
Mallas tribe, 41
Māmānkam festival, 172-3, 178-9
Manata sacrifice, 194
Manu, 21, 22, 177
Manusa, 43
Maplas, 104
Maratha tribe, 62-3
Marriages, 34-5, 126-41, 145-6
Atharva-veda hymns, 131-2
Marumakkaṭṭāyam, 148
Maruts, 23, 24, 75, 76
Marx, Karl, 239, 285
Marxist methodology, 4-5, 8-9
Matanga, 177
Matriarchal polyandry, 129, 151-2
Matriarchy, 30, 34, 35, 95-125, 143, 155, 168
Kerala, 7, 106, 163-4
Matrilineal slavery, 277, 280
Matsyas, 174, 272
Matty, S.K., 37
Mauryas, 246-7
Māyā, 83
Megasthenes, 100, 118
Menon, Padmanabh, 36, 105, 111, 112, 113, 115, 147, 249, 295, 319
Menstruation, 84
Mhasoba, Buffalo god, 198

Mitra, Vedic god, 21
Moieties, 18-19
Moirai (Greek), 162
Monastic tribe, 45-6
Morgan, L.H., 21, 25, 27, 56, 191, 313
Mother goddesses, 30-1
Concept, 71-4
Muhammad, 214
Mūlā asterism, 138-9
Muller, Max, 24

Nadi-mātṛka agriculture, 98
Nāga-muṇḍa tribe, 257, 306
Nāgabhaṭṭa, 1
Nagas, 321-2
Namboodiripad, E.M.S., 3, 61, 85
Nambūtiri marriages, 149-50, 151, 152
Nandas, 1
Naraka-caturdaśī, 205
Naraka-devi, 321
Natchez tribe, 164
Natis, 82-3
Nava-rātra, 199
Nayars, 44, 89, 107, 114, 148, 152
Marriages, 149, 150-1
Nir-vasita, 280-2
Nirṛti, 59, 70-2, 74, 75-8, 86-90, 99, 138, 314, 315, 316, 317
Characteristics, 90-2
Food, 84-5
Ni-yoga, 80-1, 100
Non-Brahmin movement, 2-4
Non-Brahminical temples, 85-6

Okkāka, King, 81, 143
Onam festival, 27, 61
Osiris, 201, 225, 228

Paiśāca marriages, 127, 134
Paṇa-dāsa, 305
Pāṇapalli Kingdom, 115
Pañca-janah, 23
Pañcāla tribe, 258-9
Pandavas, 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 117-18, 119, 129, 130, 179, 211, 283-4
Pandyan dynasty, 118
Panis, 220-1
Paraiyas, 260
Parāśara, Sage, 80, 83
Paraśurāma, 154-7, 172
Parśu (woman), 41
Pasenadi, King, 257
Pathak, Shridharasastri, 181
Pathan tribe, 64
Patriarchal slavery, 277
Patriarchal system, 24, 30, 33, 35, 104
Patrilineal kingship, 223
Perumāls, 112, 114, 115-16, 188, 225
Phratry-mother, 41
Phratry-slaves, 270, 273, 275
Phratries, 19-21, 23-4, 25-6, 33, 74, 148, 149, 191
Phule, Jotiba, 3
Pliny, 118
Plutarch, 105
Polyandry, 103, 107, 128, 129-30
Polygamy, 107, 130
Pradyumna, 25
Pramaganda, King, 36
Pramandini, Apsara, 220
Priesthood, 142-3
Female attire, 224
Functions, 317-19
Production, Small-scale, 11-12
Promiscuous copulation, 80-1, 83, 126, 214
Property, Division of, 22, 23
Proto-feudalism, 246
Puberty, 66, 84
Pūjaka, 242
Pulayas, 85
Puṇṇaka, Yakṣa, 248, 251, 269-70, 314, 315
Puri, B.N., 28, 42, 284, 288
Purūravas, 34, 154, 179, 183-4, 186, 223, 224-5
Puruṣa, 168-9, 206-7
Puṛṣa sacrifice, 196, 200, 207, 211, 294, 311-14, 316-17, 319-20
Pūṣan, 166
Pūtanā, 101, 235

Queens, 100-1

Quilon Kingdom, 115

Raghunanada, 1
Rain deity, 143-4
Rain-making magic, 145, 213
Raja, C. Kunhan, 86
Rāja-suya sacrifice, 62, 72, 84-5, 90, 95, 97, 223
Rājya-śulkā, 131, 271
Raksa Puruṣam, 172, 173
Rākṣasa marriages, 271
Rāmā (phratry slave), 275
Rangachari, K., 148, 151, 250, 260
Rāṣtra (tribal land), 53, 60, 83, 96, 98, 156, 213, 223, 240, 251, 270
Rastri, 98-9, 120-1, 292
Raṭṭhapala, Monk, 273
Recles, Elie, 230
Rice cultivation, 115
Riparian agriculture, 118
Ritual suicide, 187-8
Rohita, Prince, 294
Roman slaves, 11
Royal cattle
  Tendering, 300-1
Royal consecration, 95-6, 143
Royal land, 53, 246, 247-8, 301
Royal officials, 301-4
Rsabha (priest-king), 31
Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's story, 144-5
Ruben, Walter, 268
Rudra, 23-4, 155, 179, 204-5

Sachem, 198
Sacred grove, 86
Sacrificial animals, 199-200
Sacrificial barter, 286
Sacrificial victim, 186-7, 190
Sacrifices, 28, 172-210
Sāktas, 74
Saktism, 74
Sakulyas, 22
Śakuntalā, 232
Śākya tribe, 102, 143, 166, 182, 255, 272, 306
  Communal slaves, 256-8
Salākag-gahāpaka, 304
Śālva phratry, 41, 162
Salya, King, 110
Samana, 17-18, 174-5
Samāvartana ritual, 66-7
Samaya, 128-9, 160
Sambandham marriage, 149-50
Samsi, Queen, 103
Saṁvarṇa, 119
Saṅgha, 28-9
Sañjaya, King, 294
Śankarācārya, 1, 23, 24, 36, 168, 292, 293
Sankrityayana, Rahul, 40, 41, 216
Sānta-Ṛṣyaśṛṅga story, 254
Śantanu, King, 129, 159-60
Sapiṇḍas, 22
Sarasvati river, 97, 98, 99
Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna story, 282
Sarkar, Jadunath, 38
Śarmisthā, 84, 308
Sarup, Lakshman, 28, 64, 214
Sastri, A.D., Nilakanta, 111
Sathe, Anna Bhau, 136
Satyabhāma, 25, 116
Satyakāma Jābāla, 213-14, 320
Sātyaki, 25
Savitṛ, 31, 118-19
Seneca tribe, 198
Senguṭṭuvān, King, 110
Sennocherib, 103
Serpent cult, 114
Serpent-grove, 88-9
Sexual behaviour, 127, 146-7
Sexual freedom, 78-81
Sexual morality, 78
Sexual promiscuity, 127-8
Sharma, R.S., 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 37
Shastri, K.A., Nilakanta, 298
Sho-Pir, 58
Sīmanta-unnayana rite, 160-2, 163
Sindhu-vaktra agriculture, 98
Sircar, D.C., 37
Śiśu-pāla, 254
Sītā (Royal land), 53, 246, 247-8, 301
Sītā sacrifice, 38-9, 72, 89
Śiva, 204-5
Skanda, Festival of, 175
Skin colour, 8
Slaughtered horse copulation, 195-6

Slave labour, 239-40
Slavery, 1-2, 4-5, 128, 131, 165, 238-327
  Chanana's approach, 12
  Dange's definition, 5, 8, 11
  Meaning, 239-40
  Mughal period, 6
  Ram Bilas Sharma's thesis, 8-9
  Sultanate period, 6
Slaves
  Categories, 248-50, 305-12
  Children, 277-9
  Commensality relations with master, 257-8
  Definition, 276-7
  Dress, 261-2
  Feeding, 244, 262-3
  Life slaves, 304-5
  Marriages, 278
  Price and sale, 279, 294-7, 307-8
  Proper names, 264-6, 269
  Working conditions, 263-4
Slaves' village, 244
Smith, W. Robertson, 200, 288
Socialism, 58
Solar year, 179
Soma
  Exchange value, 289-90
Soma (plant king), 75
Soma-krayaṇī ritual, 292-3
Soma-Sūrya marriage, 131-2
South India
  Government, 111, 115
Sowing festival, 166
Spartacus, 11
Sphya, 96-7
Śṛgāla, King, 100
Śrvaṇā sacrifice, 89
State slave, 48-9
Stri-rājya, 100-1
Śudās, 233
Suddhodana, King, 166
Sudinna, 273
Śūdra women
  Sexual promiscuity, 127
Śūdras
  Ambedkar's questions, 4
  As Vājasaneyins, 75
  Enslavement, 211
  Definition, 276-7
Sufis, 185
Sukanya, Princess, 154
Śunahśepa Ajigarti, 179
Sunda, 220
Syamantake jewel, 25

Talaikkol festival, 177
Tempu-rāṭṭi, 172
Tāntrikas, 137-8
Tāra, 147-8
Taṛavād system, 7, 106-7, 148, 149
Tāvalis, 107
Te'elkhunu, Queen, 103
Temple-land, 215-17, 240, 293, 308
  Slaves, 240-1, 243-5, 262, 270, 280, 307, 308
Thomson, George, 9, 11, 64, 82, 91, 185
Thullanandā (nun), 40
Thurston, E., 148, 151, 250, 260
Tibt
  Group marriages, 80
Tiglath Pilaser III, 103
Tilak, B.G., 2
Todas, 130
Travancore Kingdom, 111, 112-14, 115-16
Trees
  As clan deities, 74
Tribal assembly, 81
Tribal confederation, 41
Tribal land, 53, 60, 83, 96, 98, 156, 163, 213, 223, 240, 251, 270
  Distribution, 58-9, 97
Tribal membership
  Initiation, 66
Tribal mother, 33-51, 52, 67, 144, 214, 254, 283, 304
Tribe, 23-9
Triūne mother, 90-1
Tvaṣṭṛ, 99, 138-9, 223-4, 229, 235
Two-caste system, 1, 8
Tyumenev, A.I., 215

Uchāral festival, 84
Uda-hāris, 274
Uddalaka, Sage, 79
Uddālaka Āruṇi, 214

Udumbaras, 213
Ulūpi, Princess, 114
Umar, Caliph, 102
Universe, Creation of, 293
Unpaid labour, 304
Untouchables, 1, 280-2
  Ambedkar's contribution, 3-4
Uma, 182-3
Upanayana, 4, 66-7, 259
Upa-sunda, 220
Urvaśī, 48, 77, 105, 154, 177
Uṣas, 244
Utsava-saṅketa, 146-7

Vaḍḍha Liccavi, 44
Vaiśālikas, 42
Vaiśyas, 279
  Gotras, 34
Vājasaneyins, 75
Vajji tribe, 41-2, 43-4, 45, 55-6, 193-4, 218, 221
Vāk, 99, 121, 126, 139, 229
Vallabha sect, 185
Valuation, 284-5, 286-7
Varga fights, 26
Varga system, 27, 28-9
Varṇa system, 8
  Colour theory, 8
Varuṇa, 205, 230, 235, 314
Vāsabha-khattiyā, 257, 279
Vasantasenā, 49
Vasiṣṭha, 20, 24, 30, 40, 142, 143, 177, 178, 203, 232, 233, 317
Vasus, 23
Vedic months, 180
Vedic society, 17-32
Vesāli city, 44
Vessantara, 242
Videhas, 42
Vidhura, 251-2, 314
Vidudabha, King, 257-8
Vidura, 167-8, 275, 279, 282, 297
Vilāsavatī, Queen, 77, 88
Villages, 149-50
Virāṭ, 293
Virāṭas clan, 272
Virginhood, Regaining of, 83-4
Visākhā, (nun), 270
Viśas, 23, 24
Visscher, Jacobus Canter, 26
Viśvāmitra, 23, 143
Viśvedevas, 23, 75, 76
Vrijis, 43
Vṛṣṇi phratry, 25
Vṛtra (Brahman priest), 142, 178, 294
Vyāsa, 80, 168, 229

Wagner, Richard, 282
War prisoners, 255, 305-6
Whitney, W.D., 39
Wrede, Fracis, 230

Yādava tribe, 25, 267
Yājñvalkya, 255
Yakkhas, 194
Yama, 315
Yama-Yami dialogue, 225-6
Yaśodhara, 41
Yāsya, 143
Yaudheya tribe, 41
Yayāti, 84, 275, 308
Yoga, 138
Yogini, 137, 138
Yudhā (tribal mother), 41
Yuddha-jita dasa, 255, 305-6
Yudhiṣṭhira, 23, 117, 131, 138, 168, 254

Zabidi, Queen, 103
Zamorin, 230
Zulu tribe, 96-7

D. C. P. R. I. Poona. LIBRARY.